

Roma on the Czech countryside: Determinants of exclusion, potentials for inclusion

Dissertation report

**Presented in July 2019 by Dipl.-Ing. Jakob Hurrel
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at the Geographical Institute of the Faculty of Sciences at Charles University, Prague**

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I declare that I wrote the dissertation report on my own, and that I cited all used information sources and literature. Neither the whole work nor any of its parts were used to gain the same or a similar academic title.

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Praha, 30.7.2019

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Acknowledgments

I would like to thank my PhD supervisor, prof. Luděk Sýkora for valuable advice and a lot of patience. My work also profited from the collaboration with my colleagues from the Centre for the Research of Settlements and Regions (CVMR) at Charles University's Faculty of Sciences Roman Matoušek, Petr Kučera and Michaela Pixová. In addition to this, I am deeply thankful for my long-term collaborations with Lucie Trlifajová, who participated in many of the research activities that contributed to this dissertation and is co-author of three of the five published texts that are included in the appendix of this dissertation. Other close colleagues who deserve to be mentioned are Daniel Škobla and Jan Grill, with whom I co-operated on a number of research projects in Slovakia. A special thank you belongs to my wife Laura, my sons Frederik and Filip, and my parents.

My work was supported by the GAČR project "New socio-spatial formations: Segregation in the context of the post-communist transformation and globalization" (No. P404/12/0648) and the PhD research project No. 1576214 "Double marginalization. Determinants of exclusion and potentials for inclusion of Roma in rural Czech municipalities". In addition to this, the realization of a survey among rural municipalities was realized with support of the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation. Both my work and my children profited greatly from the opportunity to use for several years the wonderful services of the faculty-run kindergarten *Rybička*. I would like to express my gratitude for all of these important contributions.

English abstract

The dissertation project *Roma on the Czech countryside: Determinants of exclusion, potentials for inclusion* deals with the situation of Roma in Czech rural municipalities. The starting motivation for the author's exploration of this topic has been information about the growing number of segregated localities in rural areas. In the local public discourses within the peripheral areas, this phenomenon has often been explained as the consequence of poverty-driven urban-rural migration. However, as the migration of socially excluded populations into disadvantaged areas stirs a lot of fears and negative emotions that provide a fertile ground for the spread of rumours, the author's preparatory research soon revealed that it is necessary to carefully distinguish between myths and reality.

The author's desire to understand the complex processes behind the emergence of new Roma localities in rural areas required a combination of working methods: The author analysed the national policy and regulatory framework and realized empirical research in five micro-regions in different parts of the Czech Republic. In addition to this, data were gained through the realization of a country-wide survey with two different sets of questionnaires, which targeted rural municipalities with socially excluded localities and urban social departments responsible for these municipalities from the same region (ORP). The author participated in addition to this in a number of research activities in Slovakia, which dealt with the usage of territorial and ethnic data for the evaluation and planning of public policy.

The analysis of explorative research findings from the first research phase allowed to define four areas of research: 1) Data and conceptual clarity, 2) Identification of mechanisms that drive poverty-related migration and housing segregation, 3) Position of socially excluded in relation to the regional labour market, and 4) Usage of spatial and ethnic data for the better targeting of public policies. In each of these areas, the research led to the publication of at least one academic output (2 scientific articles, 2 book chapters, 1 book). While the author chose to present the dissertation as a collection of these scientific results, the dissertation report introduces the reader first to the 'broader picture' by linking the situation of the Czech Roma with the debates of unequal regional development and social exclusion. Using the structure of the defined research areas, this introduction part is followed by the presentation of the research conclusions. In each of the four sub-chapters, the author first presents the conclusions from the desk study and the field research in the selected micro-regions, to be followed by the presentation of the conclusions of the publications included in the appendix. This allows to embed the more specific findings from the publications in the overall research and to relate them to the dissertation project's overall objectives.

The research revealed that the emergence of new socially excluded localities is the result of a variety of factors. While the research documented individual cases of migration of Roma from larger cities to rural municipalities, it also showed that this is not the dominant pattern. More important are processes of segregation that occur within rural areas, such as the segregation of historically integrated rural municipalities and various patterns of migration that unfold within the rural areas. A particular significant phenomenon is 'cyclic migrants', who were described by interview partners as households that are unable to find or maintain stable housing. Linked to the problem of indebtedness and resulting in a high level of fluctuation, this type of migration has a very negative impact on the relationships within the Roma localities and between the localities and their surroundings. The problem of indebtedness is crucial also in relation to the position on the labour market. The dissertation report points also to problematic aspects of the welfare system, which failed to adequately react to the current situation on the labour market for low-

skilled work, which is increasingly characterised by the proliferation of precarious work conditions. The last research area builds upon the quest for data and conceptual clarity. Recalling the experiences of Slovakia, where territorial and ethnic data from the Slovak Atlas of Roma Communities were used to better target public investments to communities with the most urgent needs, the author discusses to what extent such an approach could be used also in the Czech Republic.

Key words:

social exclusion, Roma, rural development, domestic migration, socially excluded locality, labour market, integration, segregation, structural Funds

Abstrakt v českém jazyku

Dizertace *Romové na českém venkově: determinanty vyloučení a potenciál pro inkluzi* se zabývá situací Romů v českých obcích na venkově. Motivací pro vznik této práce a výzkum v této oblasti byly počáteční informace o rostoucím počtu segregovaných lokalit ve venkovských oblastech. Ve veřejném diskurzu týkajícím se periferií byl tento jev často vysvětlován jako důsledek ekonomické migrace z městského do venkovského prostředí. Migrace sociálně vyloučených skupin obyvatel do znevýhodněných oblastí poskytla živnou půdu šíření fám, přípravné práce na této studii ale odhalily, že je nezbytné rozlišovat mýty a realitu.

Zájem autora této dizertace na porozumění složitým procesům, které stojí za vznikem nových romských lokalit ve venkovských oblastech vyžadoval využití kombinace různých pracovních metod. Autor analyzoval národní politiku a právní rámec a uskutečnil empirický výzkum v pěti mikroregionech v různých částech České republiky. Kromě toho získal soubor dat prostřednictvím dvou celostátních dotazníkových výzkumů, které byly zaměřeny na samosprávy se sociálně vyloučenými lokalitami a sociální odbory obcí s rozšířenou působností (ORP) pod které tyto lokality územně spadají. Kromě toho se autor účastnil řady výzkumných aktivit na Slovensku, které se týkaly využití územních a etnických dat pro evaluaci a plánování veřejných politik.

Analýza zjištění z první fáze výzkumu autorovi umožnila definovat čtyři hlavní oblasti následného výzkumu. Tyto oblasti zahrnují: 1) Data a koncepční vyjasněnost, 2) Identifikace mechanismů, které vedou k migraci způsobené chudobou a segregací v bydlení, 3) Pozice sociálně vyloučených ve vztahu k regionálnímu trhu práce, 4) Využití prostorových a etnických dat pro lepší zacílení veřejných politik. V každé z těchto oblastí vedl výzkum k publikaci alespoň jednoho akademického textu (2 články v recenzovaných časopisech, 2 kapitoly ve sborníku, 1 kniha). Protože se autor rozhodl zpracovat svojí dizertaci jako soubor vědeckých publikací, uvádí čtenáře nejprve do širších souvislostí tématu a vztahuje v úvodu k dizertaci situaci českých Romů k debatám o nerovném regionálním rozvoji a sociálním vyloučení. Po úvodní části struktura dizertace sleduje jednotlivé oblasti výzkumu a přináší dílčí zjištění. Ve čtyřech podkapitolách autor nejprve prezentuje výsledky výzkumu sekundárních pramenů a terénního výzkumu ve vybraných mikroregionech a následně shrnuje závěry z relevantních vlastních publikací, které jsou ve svém celku obsaženy v příloze dizertace. Tento postup mu umožňuje vztáhnout jednotlivé dílčí výsledky publikací k širšímu celku a cílům dizertace.

Výzkum ve svém celku odhalil, že je vznik nových sociálně vyloučených lokalit způsoben řadou různých faktorů. Na jedné straně tak provedené studie dokumentovaly jednotlivé příklady migrace Romů z větších měst do venkovských obcí. Tyto případy ovšem nepředstavovaly dominantní trend. Jako důležitější se ukázaly procesy segregace, které se odehrávají v samotných venkovských oblastech, a to ať již ty, ke kterým dochází v původně historicky integrovaných venkovských obcích, tak i různé případy migrace v rámci venkovských oblastí. Jako zvláště důležitý byl identifikován fenomén "cyklických migrantů", které popsali nárotoři jako domácnosti, které nejsou schopné si najít nebo udržet stabilní bydlení. Společně s problémem zadluženosti a související pracovní fluktuací vede tento typ migrace ke zhoršování vztahů uvnitř romských lokalit a mezi příslušnou lokalitou a jejím okolím. Problém zadluženosti se zásadním způsobem odráží i na pozici těchto migrantů na pracovním trhu. Dizertace poukazuje na některé problematické aspekty sociálního systému, který nedokázal vhodně reagovat na současnou situaci nízko-kvalifikovaných uchazečů na trhu práce, kterou stále více charakterizuje rozšiřování prekérních typů zaměstnání. Závěrečná část výzkumných zjištění vychází z úsilí o koncepční vyjasnění a čistotu používaných dat. Vycházejíc ze zkušeností z využívání územních a etnických dat při práci na slovenském Atlasu romských komunit a jejich aplikace při zacílení veřejné podpory na nejpotřebnější komunity, autor diskutuje možnosti a limity uplatnění podobného přístupu i v České republice.

Klíčové slova:

sociální vyloučení, Romové, rozvoj venkova, interní migrace, sociálně vyloučená lokalita, pracovní trh, integrace, segregace, strukturální fondy

1 Introduction

1.1 A region on fire

In 2012, a fire destroyed the old baroque building of the pastorate in Staré Křečany, a small municipality in the remote Šluknovsko borderland region. As it was already the third vacant building, which within a short time turned into victims of the flames, local people believed that the houses were set on fire on purpose. Also, the local mayor of the village had a clear opinion:

*"I am convinced that the series of fires in Staré Křečany-Brtníky is connected with the critical social situation in the region, which is caused by the organised migration of problematic and non-adaptable inhabitants to our region."*¹

His mayor colleague from the town of Rumburk added:

*"There have never been as many fires before and I do not think that this is accidental. My impression is that it is an attempt to push these people out. Someone might think that it is better if the house burns down than if it is occupied by problematic people."*²

Speculations about the alleged motives of alleged anonymous arsonists are not the only indicator how the issue of alleged mass migration of poor and problematic people to the disadvantaged area has been stirring emotions in the area. In 2015, the municipality of Dolní Poustevna, another small municipality 15 km to the north of Staré Křečany, announced the plan to purchase the huge vacant building of the Dolní Poustevna border railway station. Even though there was no concrete idea how to use the large building in bad technical shape, whose reconstruction was seen as too big a task for the tiny and financially weak municipality, the supporters of the purchase argued that this would be the only possibility to prevent a situation where the building would be bought by private companies planning to house poor and problematic people.³

Five years earlier, citizen from the area had demonstrated all summer in Varnsdorf and other larger towns in the area against the "crime of the non-adaptable". In some cases, these demonstrations developed into racist manifestation against the Roma minority, which has already traditionally a higher than-average share in the region's population. Reacting to the demands of the protesters and pointing to an allegedly deteriorating security situation, mayors of the region

¹ URL (1.4.2018): https://www.idnes.cz/usti/zpravy/problemy-ve-sluknovskem-vybezku.A120811_1815401_pardubice-zpravy_ab

² Ibid.

³ URL (12.6.2018): https://decinsky.denik.cz/zpravy_region/dolni-poustevna-koupi-obri-vlakove-nadrazi-nechce-aby-v-nem-vznikla-ubytovna-201.html

sent during 2011 a total of three letters to the Czech prime minister, in which they described the situation in the “Nagorni Karabakh of the Czech Republic” in dramatic words.⁴

Following the situation in the region further, we learn about various kind of measures by the local municipalities, the state, and non-governmental organisations that were carried out in order to deal with rising inter-ethnic tensions and the alleged influx of people for whom local decision-makers and media use terms like “problematic citizen” or “non-adaptables”. Back in 2011, this was for example a state effort to strengthen police presence in the region. The state used also the state Agency for Social Inclusion in order to negotiate with the municipalities on the implementation of local integration schemes (Hurrle et al 2013a: 28). Making use of a new law that was introduced by the Czech parliament in order to fight the “business with poverty”, the latest development is the decision of many municipalities in the area to declare their whole territory as being a socially excluded zone where it is no longer possible to claim the type of housing benefits that is paid to the poorest people.

The narrative offered by the mayors from the region, which was driving the violent protests of the summer 2011, is pretty straight forward:

“The problems are caused by the massive and organized exodus of Roma and socially weak persons, who are moved to Šlukovsko from the big cities of Ústí Region, but also from Prague, Brno and other cities. Few of these people came here in order to look for work. At the opposite, these people often move to our region precisely because there is no work in our region and there will not be work for the time to come. This leaves them no other option than to live from welfare and to commit crimes and robberies, which have been rising in this year at an extreme pace.”⁵

However, a detailed study of migratory movements in the Šluknov Region commissioned by the Government Office in reaction to the situation, did not verify this narrative at all. Using data from local schools, municipal social departments and the Labour Office, the authors concluded that the mass influx of Roma from places outside the region did never happen. Instead, the authors explained the impression of increased migration activity with the situation of a relatively small and highly excluded part of the local Roma population. Unable to access regular housing, this group of people was described as moving permanently from one temporary accommodation to another, creating the impression that a huge amount of people would move into the area from the outside world (Kafková et al 2012). Paradoxically, the municipal measures that were meant to block undesirable newcomers from taking roots in a municipality might have contributed to the very creation of the problem by making it very difficult for those who lost housing to find a new permanent home.

⁴ URL (12.4.2018): https://decinsky.denik.cz/zpravy_region/reste-problemy-na-sluknovsku-vyzyvaji-politici-.html

⁵ URL (12.4.2018): https://decinsky.denik.cz/zpravy_region/reste-problemy-na-sluknovsku-vyzyvaji-politici-.html

1.2 New socially excluded Roma localities on countryside – between reality and myths

Even though incomplete, contractionary and altered both by the emotions and political motivations of the stakeholders involved, the splitters of information from the Šluknovsko micro-region presented above are well-suited to introduce the reader to the key questions of this dissertation project, which deals with the emergence of socially excluded Roma localities on the Czech countryside.

Demonstrating how deeply emotional the topic is perceived by those who feel threatened by this phenomenon, these splitters might also help to convince the reader that this topic is less marginal as it might appear at first glance. On the contrary, I would like to encourage the reader to interpret these emotions as indicators for underlying structural issues, which go far beyond the question of the relationship between Czech majority population and Roma minority. Linking the exclusion of Roma and other highly disadvantaged groups from the labour and housing markets with the issue of growing differences between successful economic centres and declining old-industrial and rural regions in general, and the development challenges of Czechia's most disadvantaged regions in particular, this research project touches a whole number of broader issues that the Czech Republic urgently needs to address.

Czechia was for a long time used to think of itself as a relatively homogenous and egalitarian society (Večerník 1996). However, recent election results, where the voters of Prague and other affluent urban centres were outvoted by voters from less affluent regions who opted for populist parties in order to express their dissatisfaction with the country's post-1989 trajectory, led recently to increased public awareness for the often-overlooked problems of poorer people and peripheral and semi-peripheral places that had been identified by a number of geographers and sociologists specializing on rural areas and regional development (e.g. Havlíček Chromý 2001, Musil 2008, Ouředníček et al 2011, Bernard Šimon 2017). The growing economic, cultural and political divide between centre and periphery is of course not only a Czech phenomenon, but an almost universal trend that has its roots in the globalization of markets and production chains and the devaluation of unskilled labour due to the automatization of production processes (Blažek Uhlíř 2011). While the depth of the growing divide between centre and periphery differs from country to country, it is no exaggeration if we see the 2011 protestors against alleged 'Roma criminality' from Varnsdorf and Šluknov in the context of more recent political upheavals, such as the election of president Trump, the outcome of the Brexit referendum, or the violent protests of the French '*gilet jaunes*'.

While it would go beyond the scope of this dissertation project to contribute to the debate about the global social and economic forces that have been driving this polarization processes, I will try to relate my research findings to this greater picture. However, while it is important to recognize this global context, this should not serve as an excuse to omit a careful analysis of the specific conditions and mechanism found in the Czech Republic that have their roots both in the history of the Czech lands and in policy choices made in the period after 1989.

1.3 Research objectives and areas

This dissertation project deals with the situation of Roma in Czech rural municipalities. Aiming to critically re-examine claims on poverty-driven migration of Roma from Czech cities to marginalized rural areas, the study draws from empirical research conducted in five micro-regions in different parts of the Czech Republic. The starting point for the project was the objective to

explain the complex processes that led to the emergence of new concentrations of poor Roma in rural areas.

While this question is very general and broad, the gradual exploration of the topic resulted in the formulation of new questions, which often focused on the impact of the Czech welfare system on the access to housing and employment. In the following, I provide the reader with an overview of research areas that I tried to address throughout the research. Answering the questions led to the writing of the scientific contributions, which are the main results of the dissertation project and are part of the annex of this dissertation.

1.3.1 Area of research 1: Data and conceptual clarity

A quick google research reveals dozens of stories of rural and disadvantaged places, where locals expressed fears about the emergence of socially excluded localities. In many cases, these fears were not more than the result of rumours, which had spread both in conventional ways and through social networks. Noticing the negative impact of such rumours on the local community, municipalities did in some cases repudiate these claims. The example of Šluknovsko mentioned in the introduction, where hitherto unquestioned and widely popularized claims about mass migration and extreme increases of the crime rate seem to have been repudiated by one study (Kafkova et al 2012), reveals that even claims by official representatives cannot be taken automatically as reliable sources of information.

However, at the same time there *are* municipalities in rural areas that experienced the emergence of new spatial concentrations of Roma. There are also studies that described how property developers – sometimes in cooperation with local politicians that were eager to clear their municipality of undesired folks, did indeed organize the moving of Roma from municipality to municipality (Tošner et al 2010: 7-8, Vomastková 2011). The relevance of the question is also supported by the results of the latest state-sponsored mapping of socially excluded localities, carried out in 2014/15, which registered as a new trend a disproportionately strong increase of newly identified localities in peripheral rural municipalities. Commenting this observation, the authors were speaking of the “loss of social exclusion’s predominantly urban character” (GAC 2015: 11). While this data seems to indicate a real trend, more data is needed in order to better estimate the true scope of the phenomenon and to understand the mechanisms that are driving these processes. This should allow to provide answers to the questions: When did the newly identified localities emerge? And from where came their inhabitants? Are they people that have been living before in the near rural surroundings, or is it possible to verify claims about urban-rural migratory movements that occurred on a larger scale?

Related to the question of data is the need for conceptual clarity. While the comparison of data from the mappings realized in 2006/7 and 2014/5 indicates that there is a significant increase of the total number of socially excluded places, it is not fully clear what criteria were applied when deciding if a house, street or neighbourhood should be included in the list or not. In addition to this, the definitions used in both studies changed somewhat, as the research team had to reflect changes in national policies that sought to de-ethnicize the question of social exclusion. Most likely, the gathering of data on socially excluded localities is further influenced by the usage of the term in public policy planning. In a situation, where the existence of a socially excluded locality can bring a municipality certain advantages or disadvantages, we must assume that this could influence the results of mapping efforts that do partly rely on information provided by municipalities. However, how to deal with ethnicity is not the only question. Another important question is the spatial criteria. As has been outlined above, the spatial definition of disadvantaged

zones is very appropriate in certain types of spaces, where the physical separation is indeed a factor that deepens the exclusion. Yet in other situations the spatial approach is less meaningful, as demonstrates the invention of seemingly contractionary terms such as “dispersed locality.” This is especially true in the case of disadvantaged rural areas with very broad social problems, where the division lines between the socially excluded minority and supposedly included majority are less clear than in the case of many urban settings.

As the first phase of research revealed that the term ‘socially excluded locality’ is used in many studies and official documents without a clear definition, my first goal in relation to this research interest was to critically reassess the current practice. Focusing mostly on examples of localities in rural regions, this research described what different types of places have been branded by researchers or policy-makers as socially excluded (Roma) localities and discusses to what extent the usage of the term is meaningful for describing the local condition.

1.3.2 Area of research 2: Mechanisms that drive poverty-related migration and housing segregation

Data from GAC 2015 and anecdotal evidence indicate that the number of excluded localities in rural municipalities has been growing disproportionately in recent years. One possible explanation for this trend is the poverty-driven migration of disadvantaged groups from urban centres to the periphery. While the data from GAC 2015 does not allow to verify or invalidate such a hypothesis, it is clear that the existence of such a trend on a larger scale would have far-reaching implications both for the disadvantaged small municipalities, who tend to lack the capacities for integration measures, and for those being pushed to these places with limited employment and education opportunities. While the displacement by gentrification processes is a common phenomenon that has been described by the Czech and international literature in various contexts (Sýkora 1993, Smith 2005), poverty-driven migration from urban agglomerations into rural locations that are entirely outside of the agglomeration’s functional bounds and offer themselves no work opportunities seems in the context of Western countries like a relatively unique phenomenon. There are however certain parallels in the history of socialist Czechoslovakia, where people with disabilities, orphans and mentally ill people were routinely relocated from urban centres to institutions into the depopulated borderland areas (Chab et al 2004, 6). Another parallel is the property-owner driven relocation of many Roma from Prague to other regions of the Czech Republic during the 1990s, which allowed owners of hitherto rent-controlled flats in attractive parts of the city to make use of their flats’ commercial potential (Baršova 2002). However, available information about these movements mention as receiving destinations not rural locations, but cities in Northern Bohemia, such as Most or Litvinov, or the settlement *Maj* in České Budějovice (Socioklub 2009, expert interview Prague 7). Targeting rural municipalities in highly peripheral areas where on the opposite the notorious relocation schemes by the city of Vsetín, which purchased for this purpose homes in villages of the Jeseník region and other rural areas (Vomastková 2011). Supposedly realized through the informal collaboration of the city administration with a businessman from the local Roma community, the city of Mladá Boleslav reportedly relocated Roma from the city centre to rural communities in the wider surroundings, which resulted in conflictual relations between the city and the municipalities concerned (informal expert interview Mladá Boleslav 2013).

As mentioned in the first research area, this research project sought to gather data in order to assess whether these are individual cases, which were the result of specific local policies, or if it is possible to detect a more general trend. In addition to the gathering of data, I was interested in the financial implications of centre-periphery migration for the household incomes. While the

move to an area with lower housing costs might appear at first glance as a rational cost-saving strategy, the calculation is quite different if the rules for welfare benefits are taken into consideration. The calculation of effects on household income requires therefore a profound knowledge of the welfare system, which compensates recipients only for certain kind of cost differences. While the effect on household budgets is strongly influenced by these rules, cost savings can clearly play a role on the side of business specializing on the housing of poor and discriminated people, as inexpensive real estate reduces the costs of the initial investment.

The identification of mechanisms should not be reduced to economic factors though. As the Roma minority is characterized by strong and widespread family bounds, migratory movements can be expected to be influenced by the existence of family networks.

Another aspect, which was revealed by the Kafková et al 2012 study on migration movements in the Šluknovsko micro-region is the issue of highly mobile households, who seem to be in permanent flow, moving from location to location. Contributing to the impression of a significant influx of people from other municipalities or regions, it was possible to identify this phenomenon also in the case of other disadvantaged microregions studied within the dissertation project (Hurrle et al 2013b, Hurrle et al 2015b).

1.3.3 Area of research 3: Position of socially excluded in relation to the regional labour market

One of the most direct indicators for a region's structural weakness is the unemployment rate. In the case of highly peripheral regions, where distances to larger centres are long and road and train infrastructure tend to be underdeveloped, the problem of lacking employment possibilities on the local level is deepened by the limited options for commuting. While these limitations are intrinsically tied to the living conditions in peripheral areas and have been described in various contexts, it is important to analyse how these geographical limitations work in combination with specific conditions of the Czech labour market, which is in the case of low-skilled labour characterized by a very low wage level and a low difference between income from labour and income from social welfare. It is also necessary to consider in this context the impact of indebtedness and wage seizure, which further reduces the difference between income from welfare and income from labour. This leaves very little economic space to cover costs that are prompted by the acceptance of employment. Obviously, costs for the daily commute are one of the most significant costs of this type. As the economic space for the covering of such costs is most limited in the case of low-skill positions, which do often not earn more than minimal wage, it is possible to conclude that a given location's position on the scale between centre and periphery is not a universal value, but can differ in dependence of the economic capabilities of different groups of inhabitants. In the case of some of the municipalities that have been included in our research, this relativity can be shown very concretely. Whereas interviewed inhabitants with low qualification were unable to find work in their home municipality and considered a 30 km-commute by bus to the regional centre as insurmountable barrier, the very same municipality could attract sub-urban commuters who cherish affordable land prices and an attractive natural environment.

The Czech Republic's welfare system has been gradually reformed in order to create incentives for unemployed to accept work (Jahoda 2006, Saxonberg Sirovátka 2009). These reforms have been in line with recommendations by international organisations, which have been promoted the implementation of the principle that 'Work must pay' on the basis of economic models (Martin Immervoll 2007). Having realized how strongly the access to the labour market in disadvantaged regions is influenced by the factors outlined above, the research in this area sought to contrast the

assumptions used in such models with empirical findings from interviews with disadvantaged people from disadvantaged areas. This allowed to formulate recommendations for the reform of the Czech Republic's regulatory framework, which should improve the labour market access of highly vulnerable people from disadvantaged regions.

Related to this is the question of over-indebtedness and the Czech Republic's system of debt collection, which has been criticized for creating huge additional costs to the most vulnerable debtors (Angel Heitzmann 2015), who are in many cases unable to leave the vicious trap of poverty and indebtedness. Recent studies revealed that over-indebtedness is in the Czech Republic a problem of massive scale, with the highest share of over-indebted households living in disadvantaged peripheral regions.

Not surprisingly, Mapa Exekucí (Map of Debts Enforcement Proceedings), a web-based application offering geographical data on the debt problem, reveals that the problem is most pressing in case of the disadvantaged regions (Hábl 2017). While the national share of persons with wage garnishment was 2017 about 8 per cent, this share is more than twice as high in the cases of the Ústí nad Labem (18,08 %) and Karlovy Vary (17,45 %) regions and reaches extremely high values in the case of some municipalities, which are typically of smaller scale, located in a peripheral position with limited commuting possibilities, and heavily affected by de-industrialization and structural change. Examples in the regions that have been studied within the frame of this dissertation project are Nové Město pod Smrkem (Frýdlantsko micro-region, 34,7 %), Vrbice (Žluticko micro-region, 30,4 %) and Slezské Rudoltice (Bruntálsko / Osoblažsko micro-region, 53,3 %).

1.3.4 Area of research 4: Usage of spatial and ethnic data for the better targeting of public policies

The era since the publication of GAC 2006a / GAC 2006b was followed by significant efforts of various national and regional authorities to better describe the situation of socially excluded Roma. Realized predominantly with public funding, the main justification for the realization of mappings and situation analyses was to improve the planning and realization of projects and public policies. Comparing the usage of spatial and ethnic data in Slovakia and the Czech Republic, I am interested in discussing how data could be used most effectively to use available resources most efficiently.

1.4 Research strategy

In order to finance the field research, I decided from the beginning to combine the work on the dissertation with applied research that dealt with the situation of Roma and / or socially excluded populations. While some of this research concerned the situation on the national level, most dealt specifically with the situation in peripheral areas of the Czech Republic. The most important contracting body was the Agency for Social Inclusion at the Czech Government Office (Prague), which assigned both local studies that mapped the situation in particular communities or micro-regions and a number of studies on concrete topics, where the researcher had often the liberty to gather data in a region of their choice. In addition to a total of eight studies conducted together with colleagues for the Agency, I carried out additional research for the Decade of Roma Inclusion Secretariat (Budapest), the World Bank (Washington), the Fundamental Rights Agency (Vienna) and the Financial Mechanism Office (Brussels). In addition to this, I took part in a number of research projects in Slovakia, which were thematically linked to the topic of my research. This research was financed by the United Nations Development Programme and the Slovak Ministry for Labour and Social Affairs.

While this strategy made it difficult to maintain a unified research methodology throughout the project, the combination with applied research made it easier to come into contact with policy-makers on the local level and to learn about the development of the national discourse on the topic. While the applied research led to research papers, which in most cases do not qualify as outcomes of scientific research, the data gathered and the ideas formulated while being in the field were used in a second phase to write scientific papers that represent the core of my dissertation project and can be found in the appendix. Most of this work was done in co-operation with Lucie Trlifajová and Petr Kučera (Czech Republic) and with Daniel Škobla and Jan Grill in case of the research activities in Slovakia.

In addition to this, the author took part in the GAČR project *"New socio-spatial formations: Segregation in the context of the post-communist transformation and globalization"* (No. P404/12/0648), which allowed to finance additional research in the regions selected for the case studies. Led by my dissertation supervisor, this project was important also for deepening the author's theoretical knowledge on questions directly related to the dissertation project. The research further profited from the support of the Czech Republic's Grant Agency, which financed the PhD research project No. 1576214 *"Double marginalization. Determinants of exclusion and potentials for inclusion of Roma in rural Czech municipalities"* directly linked to my research project. In addition to this, the realization of a survey among rural municipalities was realized with support of the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation.

1.4.1 Analysis of national policy and regulatory framework

While the focus of the research was on the level of the local case studies, a solid knowledge of state policies in areas such as housing, labour market integration, social inclusion, or welfare is necessary if we want to correctly interpret findings from the research on the local level. While the research profited in the early phase from my previous experiences with this topic, it turned out to be highly beneficial for the research to use insights gained during the research as inspiration to come back to the analysis of particular aspects of the national regulatory framework.

My understanding of the national level was deepened by the opportunity to lead the realization of the Czech civic society report on the implementation of the Czech Republic's National Roma Integration Strategy (a document known usually as Concept for Roma Integration) (Hurrle et al 2013a). Being responsible for the writing of chapters on the institutional anchoring of the issue of Roma inclusion within the Czech administration and editor of chapters on a variety of topics such as education, housing, application of anti-discrimination legislation or the usage of European funds for Roma integration, I gained a very good overview about the state approach to this issue. Confronting the strategic documents with the problems encountered while realizing the case studies in the field, I realized at the same time that the impact of such documents is limited, as the question of inclusion and exclusion are much more influenced by broader policies that do not always correspond with the intention of the official integration plans.

The increasing interest of my colleagues and me in these policy paradoxes and the resulting conversations with officials at the state Agency resulted in a number of research papers, which dealt directly with systemic issues on the level of welfare regulation and the problem of over-indebtedness (Trlifajová et al 2014, Hurrle et al 2013c). Fortunately, some of these contributions were relatively widely discussed and might have helped to push the public discourse into a direction that is more based on empirical findings.⁶

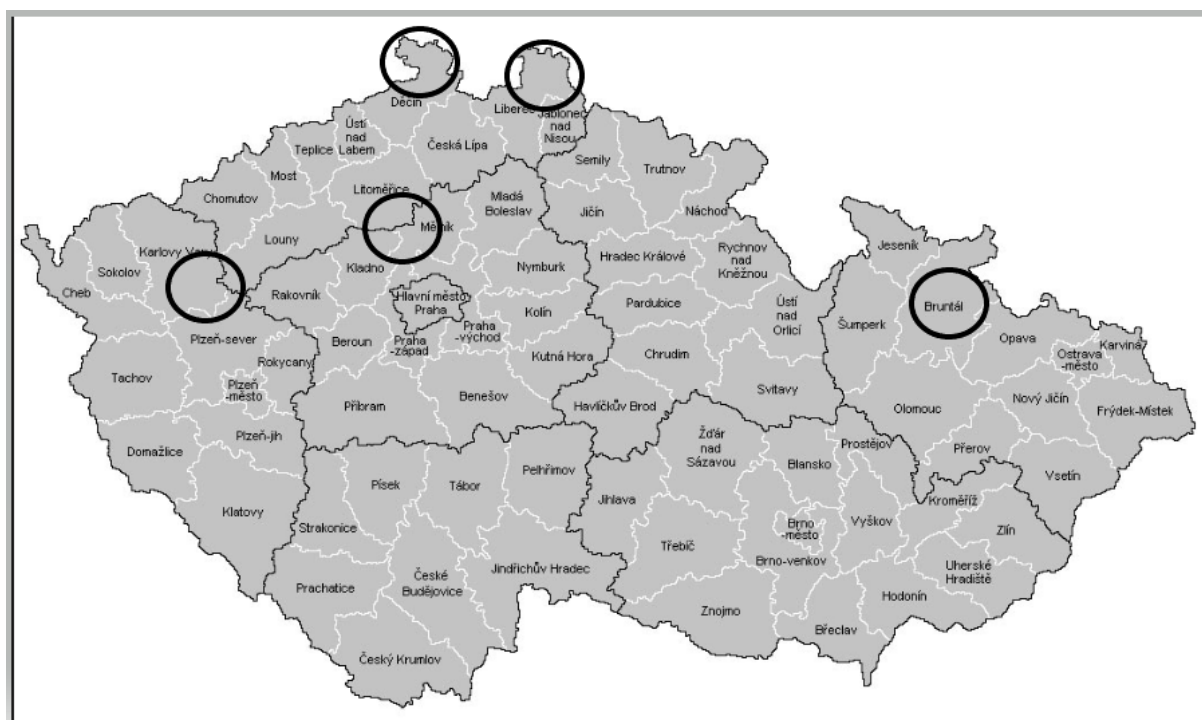
1.4.2 Realization of case studies

As the second Gabal mapping was not concluded at the beginning of my research project, there existed no current data set that would allow to select peripheral micro-regions with socially excluded localities for the realization of case studies. The selection strategy focused hence on rural micro-regions where regional bodies (formal communities of municipalities, or joint application by several municipalities) or a municipality had expressed a desire to co-operate with the state Agency for Social Inclusion in order to tackle the situation of socially excluded citizen. I did not use or develop a geographical definition of micro-region on my own, but accepted the usage of the local stakeholders. In the case of Bruntálsko, the micro-region is smaller than the existing Bruntál district. It contains Bruntál, Vrbno pod Pradědem and a number of surrounding municipalities. In three cases (Žluticko, Frydlantsko, Šluknovsko), the micro-region is equivalent to the territory of historical districts that existed in the inter-war period and were merged with other districts in 1948 (district Žlutice), respectively 1960 (districts of Frydlant and Rumburk). In the case of Mělnicko, the micro-region is an ad-hoc formation of three municipalities (Mělník, Špomyšl, Horní Počaply), who decided to apply jointly for support by the Agency for Social Inclusion.

This pragmatic definition of micro-regions allowed to combine the gathering of data for the dissertation project with the realization of practical assignments for the Agency. The final selection was made in a way that allowed to include areas from different parts of the country with different socio-economic and geographic characteristics.

⁶ For example: Lidové noviny (25.3.2013): Úřady první roky dluh nezajímá; ČT24 (3. 12. 2018): Čím více vydělají, tím méně jim zbyde. Lidem v exekuci se vyplatí pracovat málo; Mlada Fronta Dnes (23.7.2015): Průzkum: Chudí chtějí pracovat, ne brát dávky. I tak ale často živoří.

Figure 1: Map displaying regions and localities



The following table provides an overview about the selected micro-regions. It provides information about concrete localities, where the research took primarily place, summarizes key characteristics of the selected micro-regions and informs about the relationship between micro-region or municipalities from the region with the Agency for Social Inclusion. As the field research took place over a number of years the table informs also in which year the main research was conducted. This does not include additional research visits realized for the preparation of the research and follow-up visits that were realized after the main period in the regions concerned.

Table 1: Overview of micro-regions selected for case studies

Microregion, region	Key characteristics of selected region			Year of research	Main output
	Geographical position	Key characteristics	Partnership with Agency for Social Inclusion		
Mělnicko, Central Bohemia - Mělník - Spomyšl - Horní	At the outer margins of Prague agglomeration, connected to Prague by commuter trains and motorway but outside of main	Spomyšl settlement: extreme level of spatial segregation and extremely underdeveloped infrastructure;	Local partnership Mělnicko (2011 – 2014)	2012	Situation analysis Mělnicko

Počaply	<p>zone of sub-urban growth (Hampl et al 2016).</p> <p>Mix of strong agricultural and industrial tradition.</p> <p>Despite of the relative proximity to Prague, the whole micro-region is slightly disadvantaged if compared to national average (based on data for ORP⁷ Mělník).</p> <p>The analysis of data on the level of municipalities reveals significant problems on the level of individual municipalities.</p>	<p>partly informal status of built structures</p> <p>Horní Počaply: locality in centre of semi-rural Křivenice outlet of municipality; in close proximity of Mělník power station; partly informal status of built structures</p>			
<p>Šluknovsko, Ústí nad Labem region</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rumburk - Varnsdorf - Staré Křečany - Krasná Lípa <p>In addition to this research was realized in the regional centre of Děčín.</p>	<p>Remote border region, with very limited commuting possibilities.</p> <p>Strong industrial heritage (textile industry) and historically high population density, heavily affected by expulsion of German population after 1945 and deindustrialization after 1990</p> <p>High level of social problems; low educational profile of local population; significant presence of Roma minority; strong inter-ethnic tensions</p>	<p>In rural municipalities included in the research socially excluded Roma tend to live not spatially segregated.</p> <p>Segregation tendencies are stronger in the case of cities.</p>	<p>Local partnership Šluknovsko (2008 – 2012)</p> <p>Local partnership Rumburk – Staré Křečany (since 2013 to the presence)</p> <p>Local partnership Varnsdorf (since 2016)</p>	2013	<p>Situation analysis Rumburk-Staré Křečany</p> <p>Housing analysis Staré Křečany</p> <p>Analysis of indeptedness of inhabitants (along the example of Děčín)</p>

⁷ ORP = obec s rozšířenou působností (municipality with enlarged sphere of action)

<p>Žluticko, Karlov Váry region:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Žlutice - Valeč - Verušičky, including Albeřice settlement (at the time of research part of Hradiště military training ground) - Bočov - Vrbice 	<p>Historically part of the Sudet area, the area is at the same part of the Czech Republic's "inner periphery" (Musil Müller 2006), disadvantaged by its location at the outer borders of regions and districts (respectively ORPs) and the relatively weak connection to traffic infrastructure.</p> <p>The region has been structurally weak already in the pre-war period and characterized traditionally by agricultural production, which experienced after 1990 a shrinking demand for labour.</p> <p>Low educational profile and widespread poverty among majority population; Roma population is relatively small and used to be well-integrated; position of Roma and quality of inter-ethnic relations worsened after 1990.</p>	<p>Emergence of distinct localities in some of the municipalities, with high variety in regard to technical conditions and level of segregation.</p>	<p>Local partnership Žlutice (since 2012)</p>	<p>2013</p>	<p>Situation analysis Žluticko</p>
<p>Bruntálsko, Moravian-Silesian region</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Vrbno pod Pradědem - Bruntál - Karlovice 	<p>-Remote and structural weak region, with limited commuting possibilities, affected both by de-industrialization and shrinking demand for labour in forestry and agriculture</p>	<p>In Vrbno, the Roma community is very small. The problem of social exclusion, including the emergence of a house that could be described as socially excluded locality, concerns</p>	<p>Local partnership Bruntál (2010 – 2013, second partnership after 2015)</p> <p>Local partnership Osoblažsko (since 2013)</p>	<p>2013, 2015</p>	<p>Situation analysis Vrbno pod Pradědem</p> <p>Evaluation report partnership Bruntál</p>

	<p>-Very high unemployment and significant problem with indebtedness at the time of research</p> <p>-Low share of Roma among socially excluded population (Vrbno pod Pradědem)</p>	<p>mostly members of majority population.</p> <p>Large hostel-type accommodations and segregated settlement in regional centre of Bruntál.</p>	<p>Local partnership Vrbno pod Pradědem (since 2013)</p>		
<p>Frýdlantsko, Liberec Region</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nové Město pod Smrkem - Bulovka - Višnova - Frýdlant 	<p>Geographically remote border region, problems with road accessibility due to natural barrier of Jizerky mountain range and weak road infrastructure; relatively good commuting possibilities for inhabitants of municipalities along railway lines</p> <p>Traditional economic base was built on a mixture of agriculture and textile industry. Already structurally weak in pre-war period and further weakened by expulsion of German population after 1945; decline of once-dominant textile industry after 1990 and shrinking labour demand of agriculture. Considerable potential for tourism development.</p> <p>Poverty is widespread and most significant in case of Nové Město</p>	<p>With the exception of Frydlant and one object in Nové Město, where part of the local Roma population live highly segregated in houses in problematic technical condition, relatively low level of segregation.</p> <p>A number of privately owned objects in rural municipalities are frequented by 'cyclic migrants', which leads to problems in neighbourhoods.</p>	<p>Local partnership Frýdlantsko (since 2013)</p>	<p>2013, 2014</p>	<p>Situation Report Frýdlantsko (2013)</p>

	pod Smrkem and most remote municipalities close to the Polish border.				
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1.4.3 Survey among municipalities and social departments on district (ORP) level

While GAC 2015 indicated that there is a significant increase of segregated localities in rural municipalities, the data obtained from the authors of this research did neither allow to identify the reasons for this increase nor to recognize migratory patterns that might have contributed to the phenomenon. As the case studies in the five micro-regions revealed that the emergence of localities and the dynamics of migratory movements in driven by a variety of factors, the realization of a more qualitative country-wide survey was seen as a way to decide if these factors should rather be considered local specifics or at the opposite part of a broader trend. The survey was based on two different set of questions, which were sent to different groups of respondents. While the first one was sent to all 144 municipalities with less than 5000 inhabitants included in GAC 2015 (response rate 52,7 %), the second one was sent to 67 heads of the social departments of larger municipalities (so-called municipalities of extended scope of activity (ORP)), which exercise delegated state power also on the territory of the smaller municipalities included in the GAC 2015 survey (response rate 91 %). The methodology of both surveys is described in more detail in subchapter 3.2.3.

1.5 Structure of this dissertation report

This introduction text is followed by a theoretical chapter, which introduces the reader to the 'bigger picture' by exploring links between the debates on social exclusion and unequal development. It also introduces empirical data on the distribution of socially excluded localities in the Czech Republic and discusses historical factors that led to this distribution.

The main results of my dissertation research were published in the form of articles and book chapters, which are added to the dissertation in the appendix. The following table provides an overview of these texts:

Table 2: Overview of publications included in the appendix

Annex No.	Authors and name of text:	Estimate of author's share	Type of text	Content
1	Hurrle J, Sykora L, Trlifajova L, Kucera P (2016). Socially excluded localities revisited. GEOGRAFIE, 121(4), 544-565.	50 %	Scientific article	The starting points for the inquiry are existing definitions of 'socially excluded (Roma) locality' and the practical usage of the term in the area of public policy. Demonstrating that the term has developed into a key concept in the Czech Republic's institutional response to the social exclusion of Roma, the article shows that the term has been used in various research reports without a unifying definition. The empirical analyses of 'localities' in three

				of the five regions selected as case studies reveals that the term is used to describe a huge variety of conditions. In some cases, it seems questionable whether the term 'socially excluded locality' is suitable for describing the local situation. The article concludes with terminological recommendations.
2	Trlifajová, L, Hurrle J (2019a): Stěhování chudých a vznik sociálně vyloučených lokalit na venkově z perspektivy místních samospráv. In: Bernard, J. (ed.) (2019): Nic se tady neděje...: Životní podmínky na periferním venkově. Prague: SLON.	45 %	Book chapter	Summarizing the results of the survey among municipalities, the book chapter Trlifajová Hurrle 2019a introduces possible explanations for the increase of the number of socially excluded localities in rural areas. At the beginning of the article three explanatory hypotheses are introduced. While the first of these hypotheses explains the emergence of new localities in rural communities as the result of migration from cities to the countryside, the second explanation are processes of concentration and segregation occurring within rural areas. The third hypothesis explains the increase of known localities with the increasing knowledge of the phenomenon, which was gradually broadened thanks to establishment of the concept of the socially excluded locality and the establishment of the Agency for Social Inclusion, which realized a large number of local and regional studies dealing with the phenomenon.
3	Trlifajová L, Hurrle J (2019b). Work must pay: Does it? Precarious employment and employment motivation for low-income households. Journal of European Social Policy, 29(3), 376-395.	30 %	Scientific article	The article's topic is the position of people with low qualifications from disadvantaged regions on the labour market. Combining the findings from interviews with members of this group and the modelling of changes of employment status on the family income, this article addresses how the Czech welfare, tax and dept collection system creates barriers to the acceptance of legal employment. Describing typical survival strategies of inhabitants of disadvantaged regions with low qualification, the article questions the notion of a clear division line between formal employment and work on the black labour. While most economic models are based on the assumption of full-time employment with a regular labour contract, the interview partners were seldom given such an opportunity. Hence they often have to function in a shadow zone, where combinations of regular and irregular employment are widespread.
4	Hurrle J, Ivanov A., Grill, J, Kling J, Škobla D (2012). Uncertain impact: have the	40 %	book	Focusing on the example of Slovakia, the analysis uses territorial data in order to question if EU-financed programmes were successful in reaching Roma populations with

	Roma in Slovakia benefited from the European Social Fund. Findings from an Analysis of the ESF Employment and Social Inclusion Projects in the 2007–2013 Programming Period. Bratislava: United Nations Development Program.			the biggest need. The study demonstrates that only a relatively small share of the spending that is earmarked as being relevant to marginalized Roma communities (in Slovakia defined as “MRK”) is indeed directly reaching Roma. Combining territorial data on spending of ESF resources with data from the 2004 Atlas on Roma Communities in Slovakia (Radičová 2004), the study contradicted the popular myth that huge amounts of public resources are spend for the purpose of Roma integration. One of the tools that were developed by the authors of the study and used to analyse the territorial targeting of the projects was the Segregation and Underdevelopment Index, which ranks locations on a rank from 0 (least level of segregation and underdevelopment) to 15 (extremely underdeveloped and highly segregated). From a methodological point of view, the study showed that the Slovak Atlas for Roma Communities is an extremely useful dataset that can be used when tracking spending that is supposed to reach Roma.
5	Hurrle, J: Aplikačné možnosti údajov z ATLASU. In: Mušinka, A., Škobla, D, Hurrle, J., Matlovičová, K, Kling, . (2014): Atlas rómskych komunit na Slovensku 2013. Bratislava: Regionálne centrum Rozvojového programu OSN Pre Európu a Spoločenstvo nezávislých štátov.	100 %	book chapter	While Hurrle et al (2012) had been realized with the outdated data set from the 2002 Atlas, the 2012 update presented in the 2013 edition of the Atlas (Mušinka et al 2013) allowed to link data on spending with current information on the conditions in individual municipalities and settlements. While the Segregation and Underdevelopment Index introduced in the 2012 study showed some possible ways of operationalization, the next logical step was to ask how to use the data from the Atlas when designing grant programmes and deciding how to better steer resources to locations that are in biggest need. In the fourth chapter of the Atlas, which is included in the appendix, I suggested how the data from the Atlas could be used for this purpose.

Divided in four subchapters, Chapter 3 presents the most important findings from the texts included in the appendix and embeds them into the findings of the field research in the selected micro-regions. The chapter further puts them into relation to the research objectives and questions developed in the introduction. Chapter 4 offers a summary of the most important conclusions and concrete recommendations, which could help to improve the situation of Roma and other people threatened by social exclusion in rural areas.

2 The Bigger Picture: Linking unequal regional development, social exclusion, and the Czech Roma

2.1 Of 'wasted lives' and 'wasted people'

In "Wasted lives", Zygmunt Bauman's book about those who became redundant and socially excluded in the consequence of technological change and economic re-organization, Baumann describes the "production of 'human waste' as an inevitable outcome of modernization, and an inseparable accompaniment of modernity:

"It is an inescapable effect of order building (each order casts some part of the extend population as 'out of place', 'unfit' or 'undesirable') and of economic progress (that cannot proceed without degrading and devaluing the previously effective modes of 'making a living' and therefore cannot but deprive their practitioners of their livelihood). (Baumann 2003: 5)

While Baumann is referring to people, whose skills are no longer in demand, the allegory of waste-production could be applied also to places, whose economic base has been destroyed by modernization processes, such as globalization or the spreading of new technologies. Both of these processes, the production of 'wasted people' and the production of 'wasted places', are in a number of ways interlinked. In areas affected by deindustrialization, the collapse of a once dominant industry could result in an oversupply of workers, whose specific skills do not correspond with the needs of emerging new areas of employment (Wilson 1987). The spatial concentration of poverty and frustration can also result in social pathologies, such as drug abuse, high crime or hatred towards minorities (Lewis 1966, Kleffner Meisner 2017). Such developments and the resulting negative image can turn into an additional obstacle for the regeneration of the local economy (Kronauer 2010, Skogan 1992, Ellen Turner 1997).

Geographical mobility, the manifestation of individual responses to uneven regional development on the level of society, is another crucial factor that influences the relationship between 'wasted places' and their inhabitants. Moving to places that offer better opportunities offers individuals a possibility to escape from the consequences of unemployment and poverty. However, migration processes are always selective. Worsening the social capital of the places left behind, the exodus of the younger and better educated could result in an additional obstacle for the economic development of places hit by economic changes (Andersson Bråmås 2004, Hedman 2011). In the consequence, a negative development circle could accelerate. The emptying of housing capacities in the consequence of out-migration can contribute to processes of segregation and the emergence of new 'wasted places' - segregated socio-spatial formations where disadvantaged people - those who locally lost their position through processes of modernization or those who ended up being relocated to such places - live among themselves in a concentrated form (Pallagst et al 2013, Ubarevičienė et al 2016, Hassink 2010, Kühn 2015, Moldovan 2017).

Spatial segregation has been described in the sociological literature as a factor that deepens and reinforces social exclusion (e.g. Häussermann et al. 2004). However, the predominantly negative perception of such spaces provoked also counter-arguments, who warned of unnecessary

stigmatization of such spaces and pointed to positive aspects, such as ethnic and class solidarity (Kronauer 2010). However, such positive effects that were typically for the traditional Jewish and North-American ghettos rely on economic interactions between the segregated community and its surroundings (Sennett 1997, Wirth 1997). As has Wilson 1987 demonstrated in case of the modern American hyper-ghetto, where economic bounds with the rest of society are very limited, positive effects are less likely where the geographical isolation is too severe and where the inhabitants do not have a chance to participate at least economically in the wider society (see also Wacquant 2008, Wacquant 2011).

While the rise and decline of certain professions and places can be observed throughout human history, in the contemporary debate such changes are most often discussed as consequences of *globalization*. In Northern America and Europe, the globalization of economic ties strengthened the status of large cities, which were described by Sassen (1991) as control centres of the global economy. Sassen stressed at the same time that this development leads to rising inequality within the economic centres. The rising international competition brought at the same time enormous challenges to areas dominated by manufacturing and steel and coal production. While there is a lot of geographical literature that deals with the emergence of specialized clusters as a positive phenomenon, which increases the competitiveness of regions (Lorezen 2005, Blažek Hejnová 2012), Robert Hassink stresses that there are also negative clusters, with a concentration of old industries, where “initial strengths based on geography and networks, such as industrial atmosphere, highly specialized infrastructure, close inter-firm relations and strong support by regional institutions, turned into barriers to innovation.” (Hassink 2010: 450). While the debate on de-industrialization has focused mostly on the plight of industrial cities, rural zones of deprivation are increasingly recognized as territories that require not less attention than problematic urban neighbourhoods (Tunnell 2006, Patterson et al 2004, Shucksmith Chapman 1998, Davidson 1990).

2.2 Spatial inequality in the Czech Republic

The transformation of spatial structures in the Czech Republic echoes developments that have been described in the literature on Western European and the US as consequences of globalization. However, it is important to reflect on the quite specific situation of the Central and Eastern European countries, where the economic transformation started later and occurred at a higher pace. After 1990, Czechia saw in a relatively short time-span the abandoning of whole industries, such as textile or glassmaking, and a drastic reduction of work places in agriculture, mining and the heavy industry (Koutsky 2011, Myant 2003). Czechia was on the other side successful in attracting a large number of foreign investors, which allowed the country to maintain a highly industrialized economic profile (Žížalová 2006). However, as the 21st century’s global economy has different locational preferences and different skill requirements than during the Industrial Revolution, these new investments did not always bring benefits to the places and people that had been hit hardest by the economic transformation (Illner Andrlé 1994, Pavlínek 2004, Hampl Müller 2011, Hampl Marada 2016). One result of this development was the emergence of structurally disadvantaged regions and a number of highly disadvantaged micro-regions, where unemployment is significantly above and the wage level significantly below the national average (Bernard Šimon 2017).

While the transformation led to profound changes of spatial and social structures, it is important to keep in mind that after 1990 no new society was built from scratches. The changes occurred in

geographical and social structures inherited from earlier times (Gorzela 2012: 35-46). In relation to areas that are today debated as marginalized, it is possible to identify a number of historical factors, which contributed to the challenges encountered today.

Going back to the times of Austria-Hungary, one of these formative patterns has been the already mentioned clustering of the textile and glass industries in certain regions in the northern part of the Czech Republic. The industrialization of this period concerned not only industrial centres, such as the cities of Liberec or Varnsdorf, but also smaller towns and villages in mountainous areas. While some of these textile regions used to be affluent and high developed, these industries encountered severe problems after the opening of the Czech economy to global competition in the 1990s. The closure of the traditional industries reduced the demand for certain professions and logically led also to the decay of the infrastructure for vocational education, which had sustained the industrial tradition for more than one century. As former regional strengths had turned dysfunctional, it is possible to conceptualize the historical textile and glass industry clusters as negative clusters in the sense of Hassink 2010.

Mostly the result of the industrial policy of the socialist period, another formative pattern is the concentration of coal mining and heavy in Northern Bohemia and Northern Moravia, which resulted in heavy pollution and large losses of ecological and cultural values (Vaněk 1996). Even though coal extraction and the heavy industry continues to be of economic importance, the economic restructuring after 1990 reduced the demand for labour. While the ecological problems of these areas are today not as striking as in the socialist era, the low educational profile of the population and the concentration of social pathologies represent important obstacles for successful development.

A third pattern, which continues to influence Czechia's geography to this day, is the historical dichotomy between *vnitrozemí* (the interior) and *Sudety*, the formerly German-inhabited Sudetenland. The latter saw after 1945 an almost complete population exchange, which resulted in enormous losses of social, economic and cultural capital (Siwek 2012: 25-26). While the formerly German-inhabited areas contain very different regions that differ greatly in regard to their social situation and economic potential, the problematic legacy of the population exchange continues to be visible in maps depicting various sociological and political data, such as electoral behaviour, poverty or indebtedness.

Discussed under the term "inner periphery", another legacy from the post-war period has been the central allocation of state investments in regional administrative centres at the expense of marginal rural areas, which resulted in the marginalization of the former district's peripheries (Musil Müller 2006). On a regional scale, it would be possible to identify other formative patterns, such as former military training bases or the depopulated former "no man's lands" along the border to Austria and Western Germany.

Even though all of these factors did strongly influence life conditions already in the era of socialist Czechoslovakia, the redistribution of state resources and state interventions in the labour market led to the minimizing of differences in regard to household income and employment. Accordingly, the issue of regional polarization and the plight of disadvantaged regions was in the academic literature for a long time in the shadow of other research questions (Havlíček et al 2010: 10).

I suggest to conceptualize the listed historical factors as layers that tend to contribute to peripheralization. In the case of many municipalities with serious development problems, these layers do emerge in combination (see table 3 in relation to selected regions). However, we should at the same time keep in mind that the shared historical experiences do not automatically determine a location's potential. Obviously, local inhabitants and their elected representatives

have been coping with the challenges very differently. To some extent, the difficult footprints of history can also be ‘swept away’ by newer developments, such as the building of a new motorway, the foundation of a new university, or the rise of the tourism industry. As outlined already before, peripherality might in addition to this not be the experience of all inhabitants in a given location or region, as opportunities increase with better skills and access to resources. Even the geographical distance to larger centres is relative, as the people’s radius of action depends not only on the technical infrastructure but also on financial resources. Last but not least, remoteness could also be a preference and a potential for development. This is most obvious in tourist destinations, where those participating in the tourist business proved able to exploit “peripherality” as a resource.

Table 3: Relevant historical and geographical factors in case of selected micro-regions

Micro-region	Layers of historical and geographical disadvantage							
	Historical concentration of textile or glass industry	Dominance of coal, steel and chemical industry	Dominance of agriculture	Sudet area	Border area	Inner periphery	Geographic barriers	Other
Mělnícko, Central Bohemia	-	partly (Horní Počaply)	No, but strong agriculture profile	partly (not places studied)	-	-	no	
Šluknovsko, Ústí region	X	-		X	X		yes	
Žluticko, Karlov Vary region			X	X		X		Military training ground Hradiště
Bruntálsko, Moravian-Silesian region	X			X	X		yes	Military training ground Libavá
Frýdlantsko, Liberec region	X		X	X	X		yes	

Arguably, the negative impact of rising interregional disparities is aggregated by very low geographical mobility of the Czech population. Hampf Müller 2011 point to the linkages between low mobility and the housing policies of the transformation era that resulted in a “deformation of the housing market and housing construction:

While rent regulation was left in place, the support of housing construction was stopped. This resulted on the one side in the dwindling of housing construction and the

limitation of the “free” housing market, respectively its limited accessibility for domestic costumers. On the other hand turned housing ownership, a phenomenon that is very widespread in the Czech Republic, into a factor that limited the migration of the population.” (Hampl Müller 2011: 218)

In the consequence, population numbers in economically depressed areas have been declining only relatively slowly. However, the true extend of the *brain drain* of the younger and better educated from disadvantaged areas to cities is likely to be larger as official data on registration suggests, as it is common in the Czech Republic to distinguish between official and actual place of residence with the earlier remaining for long periods e.g. at the address of parents.

2.3 Regional inequality and the position of the Czech Roma minority

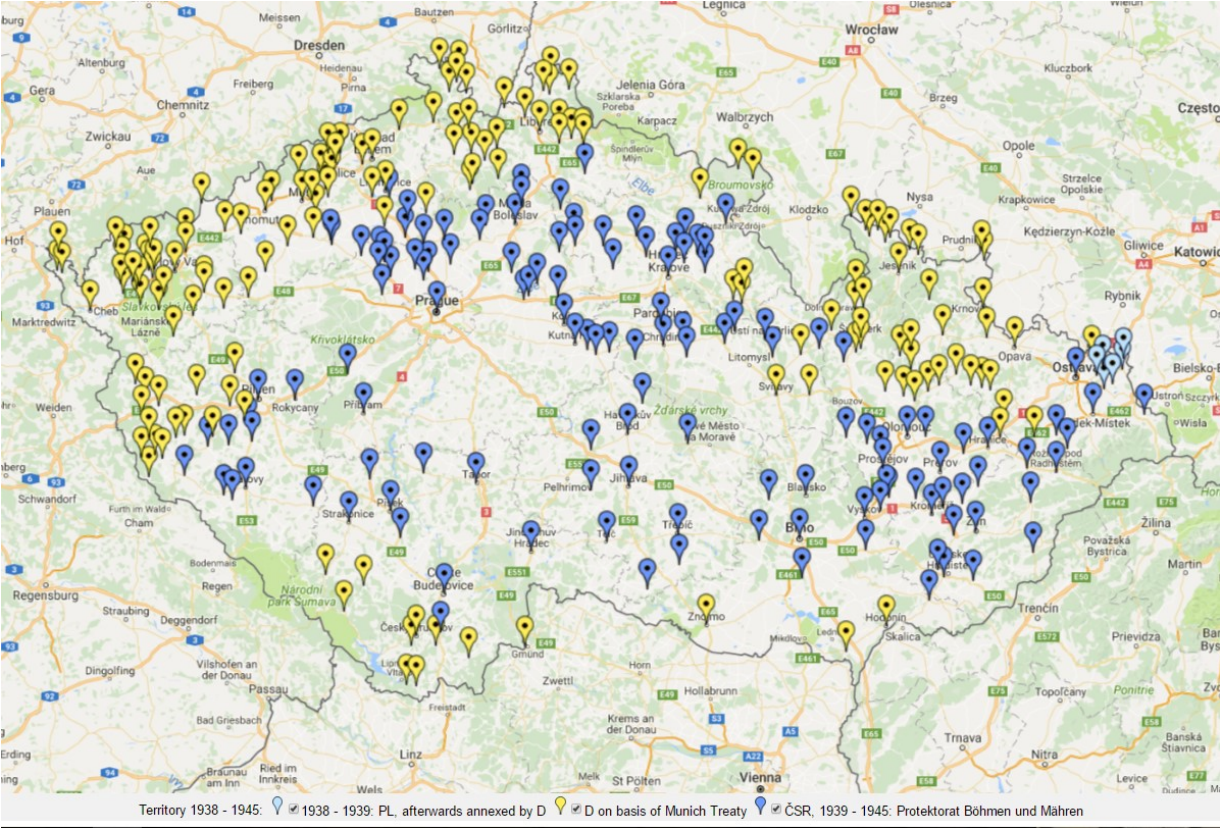
As almost all Roma who had been living in the Czech lands before the war had perished during the holocaust, the current Czech Roma minority are mostly descendants of Roma who came to the Czech lands in the post-war period as domestic labour migrants from Slovakia (Davidová 1995, Sidiropulu-Janků 2013). In view of this history, it is not surprising that the territorial distribution of the Roma minority was strongly influenced by the formative layers introduced above.

Unfortunately, the data on ethnic self-identification in the official census are of limited validity as most members of the Roma identity choose to not identify as Roma in the census. Even though focussing only on the socially excluded members of the Roma community, the mappings of socially excluded (Roma) localities realized in 2005/6 and 2014/15 are therefore probably the best indicators for the geographical distribution of the Roma minority. The 2015 GAC report identified a total of 606 socially excluded localities inhabited by 95 000 to 115 000 people, which is almost twice as many locations and about 40 % more inhabitants as were identified in the first mapping (GAC 2015: 31). Up to 60 % of the socially excluded population lives in the Ústí nad Labem and Moravian-Silesian regions, which are deeply marked by the difficult transformation of heavy industry and mining (32). This concentration and the disproportionally strong increase of the number of locations in these two regions is interpreted by the authors as clear indication for the “replication of social exclusion in regions where it has been observed already traditionally” (32).

The concentration in the Ústí nad Labem and Moravian-Silesian regions points at the same time to the multi-dimensionality of the spatial disadvantage on the regional level. Large sections of both regions are part of the historical Sudetenland. In addition to the zones dominated by coal mining and heavy industry, there is a large number of municipalities where the once dominant traditional economic base (textile, glass-making, porcelain) was negatively affected by the economic transformation (e.g. Šluknovsko, Děčínsko, Bruntalsko) and peripheral rural areas that are either geographically isolated close to the state border (Osloblažko) or part of the “inner periphery” (Lounsko, Podbořansko). Historically, Roma from Slovakia were directed to these areas by the socialist state in order to close labour shortages that went often back to the population loss inflicted by the expulsion of the German population. (Sadilková 2016, Spurny 2011). In addition to this, the Czech Republic saw after 1990 a migration of Roma from Prague and other economic centres to disadvantaged areas, which was at least partly orchestrated by real estate owners interested in making use of commercially interesting inner-city flats inhabited by Roma (Baršova 2012, Tošner et al 2010). If looking beyond Ústí and Northern Moravian Region, the analysis of the GAC 2015 data points to a general tendency of Roma / socially excluded citizen to be

overrepresented in areas that are covered by several layers of disadvantage. Out of 606 localities with 109 675 inhabitants, more than half (328) of the localities and 53 % of the inhabitants are located in the former Sudetenland (map 1).⁸

Figure 2: Socially excluded localities - former Sudetenland (yellow) vs. the interior (blue)

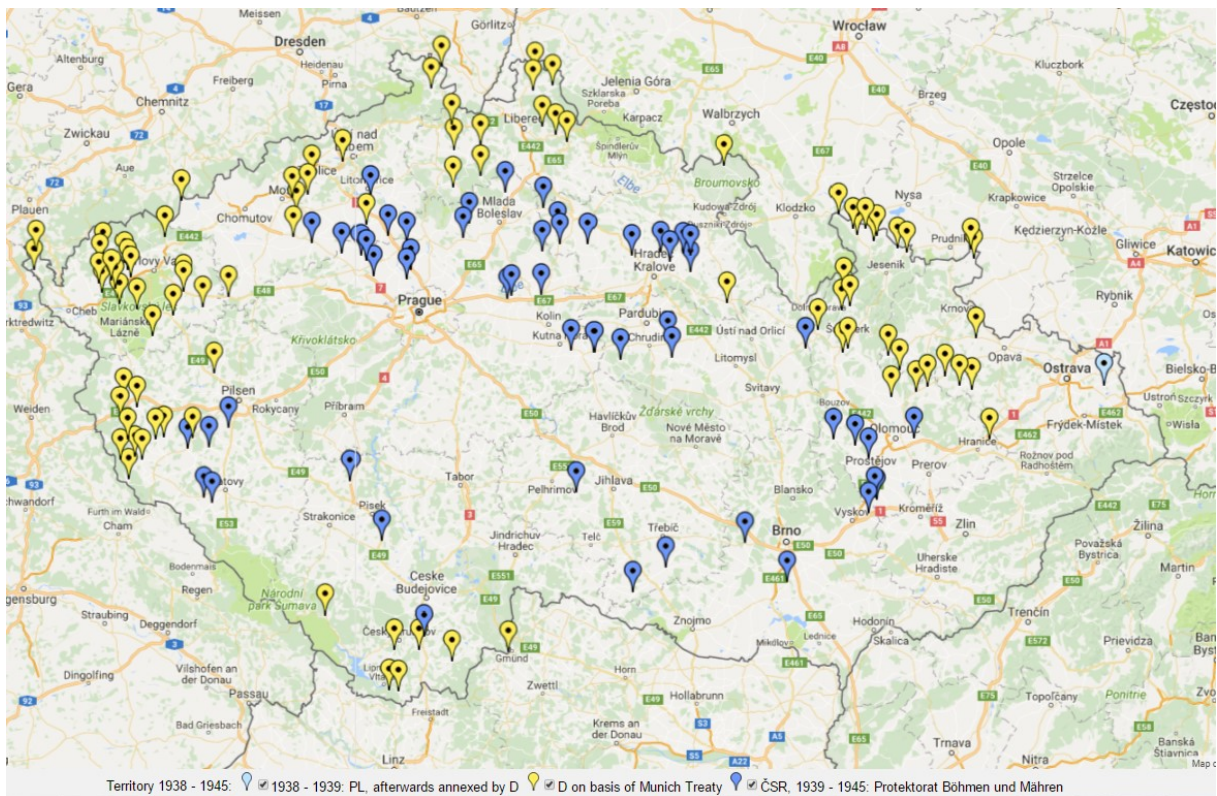


Source: GAC 2015, analysis by author

Interestingly, the share of municipalities in the historical Sudetenland is much higher when looking solely at rural municipalities (for the purpose of these calculations defined as municipalities with up to 5000 inhabitants). Of the 193 socially excluded localities with 13 215 inhabitants identified in such municipalities, 130 localities with 10 210 inhabitants (77 %) are located in the former Sudetenland with noticeable concentrations in Western Bohemia (Žluticko, Toužimsko, Sokolovsko, Tachovsko/Domažlicko), Northern Bohemia (Šluknovsko, Frýdlantsko, Liberecko) and Northern Moravia (Jeseník region). While some of these areas are dominated by agriculture, others, such as Šluknovsko and Frýdlantsko, were historically dominated by industrial production (mostly textile).

⁸ As our argument is based on the effects of the postwar population exchange, municipalities that were annexed by Germany in 1938 were considered to be part of the Sudet area whereas municipalities in the Czech-Polish border area of Těšínsko, which were annexed by Poland in 1938 and incorporated into the German Reich after the German attack on Poland in 1939 were considered to be part of the interior. Population exchanges in formerly German inhabited municipalities that remained as linguistic enclaves in the protectorate were not considered in the calculation.

Figure 3: Rural socially excluded localities - former Sudetenland (yellow) vs. the interior (blue)



Source: GAC 2015, analysis by author

2.4 The “new rural face” of social exclusion in the Czech Republic

One of the most interesting findings of the 2015 GAC report has been the growing absolute number of excluded localities in small rural municipalities and the increased share of these rural localities among all identified socially excluded localities. The share of smaller municipalities with less than 2000 (2001 - 5000) inhabitants with at least one socially excluded locality grew from 26 % (16 %) of all municipalities included in the study in 2006 to 28 % (19 %) in 2014. While hence almost half of the municipalities with excluded localities are smaller municipalities, which often are of rural character, the authors point out that the rural localities found in these municipalities tend to be much smaller than the ones in larger cities. Accordingly, the share of these municipalities is much smaller when comparing not the numbers of localities, but the number of socially excluded people.

The report further distinguishes between two types of localities in municipalities with less than 5000 inhabitants – relatively small rural localities with less than 50 inhabitants (21 % of all localities in 2014) and relatively large rural municipalities with more than 50 inhabitants (11 %):

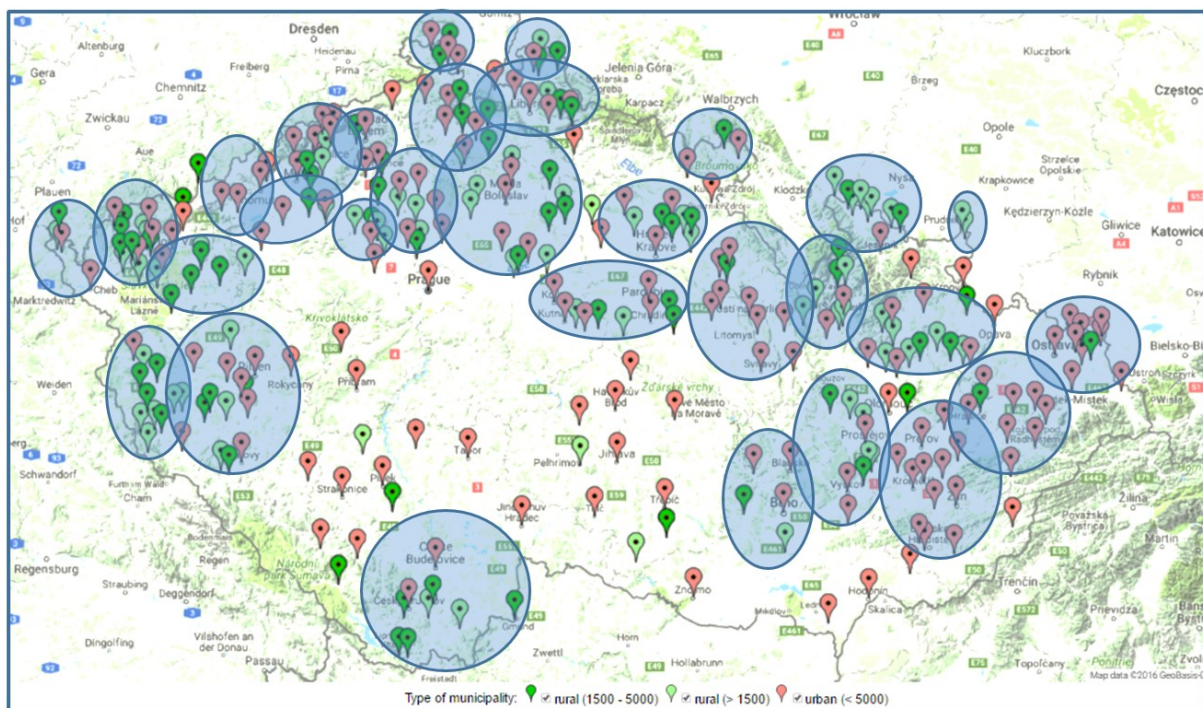
In the case of small rural localities there is a higher probability that the buildings that make up the locality are in worse physical condition. In many cases the locality is in these places just a single house or tenement house. The schools in these places do not use as many measures for the support of social inclusion and there are fewer services for people who are socially excluded or threatened by social exclusion. Some of these

localities emerged only after 2006. The share of small rural localities is highest in the Southern Czech region (38 per cent of all localities in this region), Plzen region (30 per cent), Olomouc region and Hradec Králove region (both 30 per cent).” (GAC 2015: 145)

Displaying all municipalities where GAC 2015 identified socially excluded localities, map 1 distinguishes between “urban” (more than 5000 inhabitants), “larger rural” (1500 to 5000 inhabitants) and “smaller rural” (up to 1500 inhabitants) municipalities. While there are also a number of rural and urban localities without any obvious relation to other places, the map allows to identify a large number of potential clusters that are likely to be linked functionally (e.g. through regional migratory networks), geographically or through the history of their emergence. However, the data gathered by the GAC study is not sufficiently detailed in order to decide if localities in one region are indeed linked in such ways or if we can speak rather of a co-appearance of similar, yet unrelated phenomena within the same geographical space.

In many cases, the potential cluster is centred around one larger city that is surrounded by a number of rural localities (e.g. Sokolov, Most, České Budějovice, Prostějov). In other cases, the municipalities forming the potential cluster are quite far from any larger regional centre (e.g. localities around Domažlice, north of Jeseník, Žlutice micro-regions). *Has there been a higher concentration of Roma in these areas already before 1990, or is the emergence of localities in these remote areas the result of migrations from more distant places?*

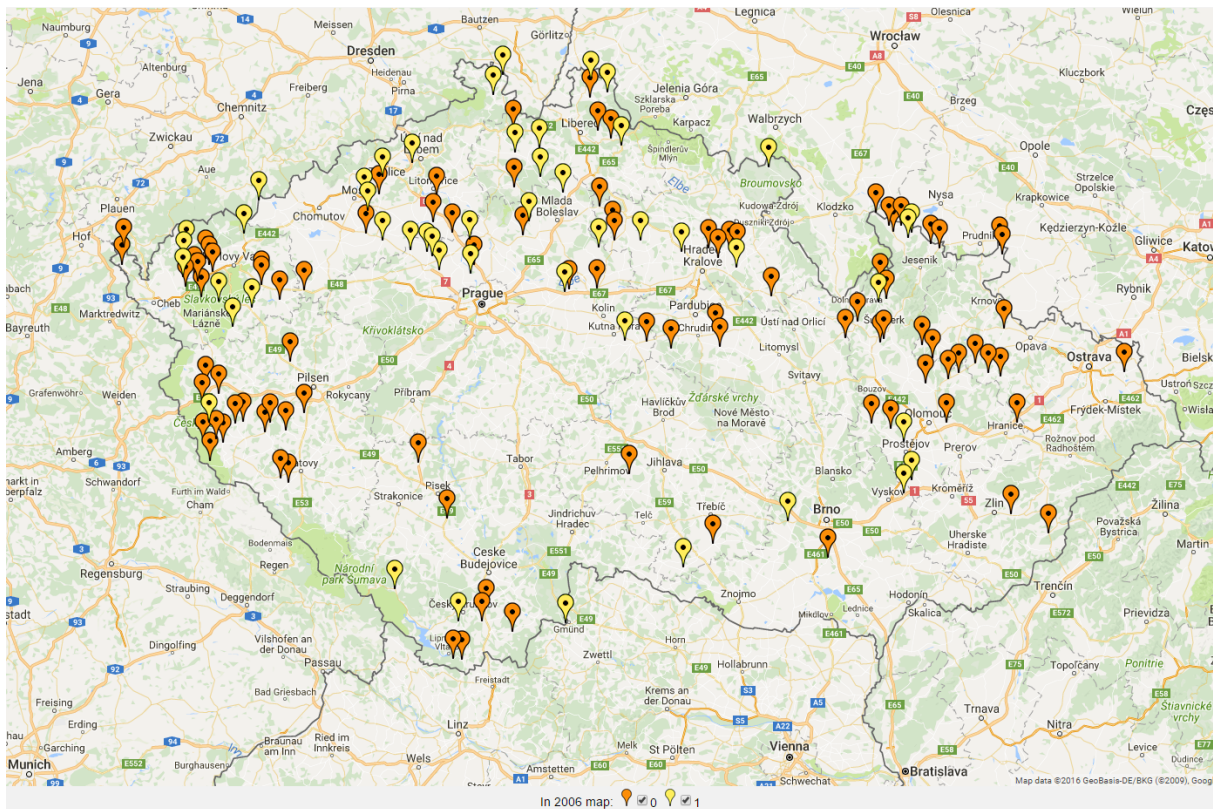
Figure 4 Socially excluded localities by size of municipalities according to GAC 2015 – identification of potential clusters



In order to approach these questions, our next step is a comparison of the results of the 2006 and 2015 mapping. While yellow dots point to localities that have been included already in the 2006 mapping, orange ones are newer or were at least not identified during the first mapping. While a few of the potential clusters mentioned above seem to be of older date with no new rural localities identified (e.g. Šluknovsko), in others new rural municipalities have emerged around older ones

(e.g. in the surroundings of Sokolov, Slaný, or Jeseník). In other cases, no or very few rural localities seem to have existed ten years ago (area between Šumperk and Hranice na Moravě, surroundings of Domažlice and České Budějovice). While this might indicate a high dynamic, which is possibly driven by migration, we will need to analyse the situation more carefully in chapter 4 in order to see if the newly identified locations are indeed as new as suggested by the comparison of the GAC data.

Figure 5 Socially excluded (Roma) localities in rural municipalities – findings from 2006 and 2015



Source of data: GAC 2006b, GAC 2015

2.5 Conclusion of this chapter

The globalization of the economy and the loss of working positions in manufacturing and agriculture alters geographical structures and intensifies differences between economic centres and peripheral zones throughout the industrialized Western world. In the case of the Czech Republic, this development worsened the disadvantage of structurally weak regions with less-developed infrastructure and a less-educated population. It is possible to identify a number of historical factors - such as the position in the former Sudet area, a geographical position in the borderlands or in the Czech Republic's inner periphery, or the historical dominance of textile and glass industry that were severely affected by industrial change after 1990 - that typically contribute to the peripheralization of a location. Being the result of resettlement schemes in the socialist period, when large numbers of Roma migrated from Eastern and Central Slovakia to the Czech lands, the majority of Czech Roma live in municipalities where several of these historical

layers of disadvantage occur in combination.

While the majority of Roma in other Central and Eastern European countries such as Slovakia, Hungary and Romania live in rural areas, the Czech Roma are predominantly an urban minority. However, the analysis of data from the two state-wide mappings of socially excluded localities allowed to identify a significant increase of localities in rural municipalities. The data allowed also to identify regional concentrations of such localities in certain regions. Untangling the dynamics behind this development has been one of the objectives of this dissertation project, whose main conclusions will be presented in the following chapter.

3 Research findings

3.1 What are socially excluded (Roma) localities in rural areas?

3.1.1 Findings from desk research and case studies

While the critical situation of the Czech Roma was during the early 1990s in the shadow of other transformation-related political issues, Roma migration to Great Britain and other Western European countries and the EU accession negotiations led in the late 1990s to considerable political pressure to tackle this issue (Barany 2001). The Czech state reacted to with the establishment of political bodies and the formulation of the first Concept for the Integration of the Roma minority (Ministr pro lidská práva 1999), which has been updated regularly since.

The ethnic approach towards the issue of Roma integration embodied by the issuing of this concept and the establishment of governmental structures for its implementation was criticized by influential non-governmental organisations and some academics (e.g. Moravec 2006), who suggested that the issue of Roma integration should primarily be approached as a social problem. The rise of this new ethnically neutral paradigm, which referred to the Western discourse on social exclusion, led soon to the founding of the government Agency for Social Inclusion in Roma Localities (in 2008, in 2010 the name was shortened to Agency for Social Inclusion) and the formulation of a second government strategy (Úřad vlády 2010) that would address the same issues with a different philosophy. To this day, the Czech Republic maintains the co-existence of both of these approaches, which are formulated in regularly updated concepts and strategies (Hurrle et al 2013a: 24). However, in the area of practical policy, ethnically neutral approaches have clearly gained the upper hand. Closely linked to this development was the rising importance of the term 'socially excluded Roma locality' or 'socially excluded locality', which soon turned into a key concept of Czech policy towards Roma.

Initially popularized as a more neutral term than the negatively connotated "ghetto", the term entered the broader public discourse with the publication of the first country-wide mapping of socially excluded Roma localities (GAC 2006, GAC 2006a). The first report (GAC 2006a) defined socially excluded Roma locality as an area that is inhabited by Roma (not necessarily exclusively) and whose population is "socially excluded". While the authors explain that social exclusion should be understood as a process, they did not provide a clear methodology how the extent of the locality's inhabitants' social exclusion should be measured. In addition to this, the authors mentioned as another defining feature the existence of both symbolic and physical frontiers between locality and its surrounding that are "recognised by both the inhabitants of the locality and those who live outside" (GAC 2006a: 10). Since the realization of the first country-wide mapping, various regional and local mappings and analyses of socially excluded localities were realized (e.g. Dvořáková 2013, SocioFactor 2013). While the state policy sought to develop efforts that would prevent the emergence of new socially excluded localities and improve the living conditions in existing ones, the existence of a socially excluded locality on a municipality's territory turned in the case of some state programmes into a precondition for state support. The most prominent example for this is the co-operation with the Agency for Social Exclusion, whose primary task is to support municipalities with socially excluded localities to develop local strategies for social inclusion. Municipalities applying for the co-operation with the Agency have to demonstrate in their application that there is a socially excluded locality on their territory.

In 2015, the results of the second country-wide mapping were published (GAC 2015). While GAC 2006 had mapped socially excluded *Roma* localities, the continuing tendency towards the de-ethnization of public policy made the realization team to focus simply on socially excluded localities. Despite of this broader definition, which complicates the comparison of the data from GAC 2006 and GAC 2015, also the newer research focused in reality only exclusively on places where at least some of the inhabitants were Roma.

The media perception of the publication of the new mapping, which had identified a significant rise of the number of socially excluded localities, reveals that the count of socially excluded localities was perceived to function also an indicator for the overall relationship between the Czech society and its Roma minority. The growing number of localities seems to indicate that Czechia was not successful in reversing the trend towards the minority's exclusion. As mentioned earlier, the data revealed at the same time a growing number of localities in rural areas.

3.1.2 Hurrle et al 2016: Introduction to the article and its research objectives

While we will deal with possible explanations for the growing number of rural localities further below, the purpose of my work in Hurrle et al 2016 was to analyse whether the places identified by reports and local governments as socially excluded localities complied at all with a common understanding of socially excluded locality. The article was written together with my dissertation supervisor, Prof. Luděk Sýkora, and two colleagues, Petr Kučera and Lucie Trlifajová, together with whom I had realized most of the field research.

Our desire to critically re-examine the concept of the socially excluded (Roma) locality and its usage in the area of public policy was motivated by a number of observations made during field work on research assignments for the Agency for Social Inclusion. First, there was a surprisingly large variety of conditions between places that had been officially labelled as socially excluded localities. Second, it was often not easy to understand why certain places had been labelled officially (by GAC 2006 / 2015, in regional studies, or by public authorities) as socially excluded localities whereas other places with very similar features were not. Talking to local stakeholders from rural municipalities, such as mayors or other types of formal or informal local authorities, it was possible to sense a certain degree of terminological uncertainty when speaking about issues related to Roma ethnicity, social exclusion and segregation. In some cases, officials made clear that they used the term socially excluded locality due to a lack of a more appropriate concept, even though they felt at the same time that the term would not really fit to the local situation (see also Hurrle et al 2011, Hurrle et al 2015). The third observation concerned ethnicity: Even though the term was initially introduced as part of an effort to de-ethnicise the Roma issue, in many places the identification seemed to be made not necessarily because of the inhabitants' status of social exclusion, but because the place represented a concentration of people of different ethnicity (Roma).

Our article (Hurrle et 2016, first text included in appendix) sought first to reconstruct the genesis of the concept of the socially excluded (Roma) locality and its development into a key instrument in the Czech policy towards Roma. It also discusses the term in relation to the international debate on social exclusion. It further inquiries to what extent the term differs from the related concept of the ghetto. Based on this theoretical part, the article examines localities in three of the five selected micro-regions in order "to demonstrate what different types of localities have been designated as SELs in official studies and documents" (Ibid.: 551). Going beyond the scope of selected micro-regions, the article discusses also the case of Kolín as an example of an urban locality.

3.1.3 Research methodology

As demonstrates table 4, the selection of cases resulted in a mix of geographical locations and past and present employment structures. Within the micro-regions, the research included localities of different sizes and with a variety of ownership structures. Municipal officials in all the municipalities included in the sample had identified socially excluded localities on their territory in their applications for the co-operation with the Agency for Social Inclusion.

Table 4: Key characteristics of the selected regions and localities

Case	Type of location	Geographical, historical and social features	Number and character of localities analysed
Kolín	Industrial town	Well-accessible, urban, industrial	1 in city: several houses in central location, municipality-owned, 90 % Roma
Mělnicko	Semi-rural region	Semi-peripheral, fertile agricultural land in combination with heavy industry	2 in villages: owned by inhabitants, highly problematic living conditions, 100 % Roma
Žluticko	Rural inner periphery	Highly remote and sparsely populated, traditionally structurally weak, historically dominated by agriculture	4 in small town, 3 in villages: various types of ownership, varying degrees of separation / integration, in most cases less than 50 % Roma
Frýdlantsko	Rural and post-industrial outer periphery	Geographically remote, strongly affected by deindustrialization	11 in small towns, 3 in villages: various types of ownership, varying degrees of separation / integration, varying proportion of Roma

Source: Hurre et al 2016: 551

As outlined already in sub-chapter 1.4.2, the realization of the field research took place over a period of several years between 2012 and 2014. Our article offers a description of the research strategy used in each of the places:

“In each case, we analysed official documents, media reports and discussions in social networks and conducted interviews during the fieldwork. The interviews were primarily conducted with residents of localities (20 – 30 per case). We also interviewed persons living in the surrounding of these localities (10 – 20 per region) and

institutional actors with knowledge of the area and local social relations, such as mayors, social workers, directors of schools and kindergartens (20 – 30 per region). The purpose of these interviews was to learn about the genesis of each locality and gather information about the social and economic situation of households in the locality including their relationship to property owners and neighbours. We also sought to learn about specific issues, such as fluctuation among tenants or problems with debts.”

The study of the localities was done with the aim to contrast the empirical findings with the definition of socially excluded locality developed by the authors of GAC 2006a and GAC 2015:

“We expected that places visited during the field research would comply with a common understanding of SEL, i.e. that they would be: “an area inhabited by a group whose members consider themselves to be Roma and/or are considered as such by a majority of people in their neighbourhood, and who are socially excluded” (GAC 2006a: 10). Furthermore, the locality would be “a single building in which several individuals or families live, or a whole town district consisting of several hundreds or thousands of residents” (ibid.). An important feature distinguishing the locality would be “frontiers of such area”, which “may be both symbolic and physical. In both cases, the frontier would be recognised by both the inhabitants of the locality and those who live outside” (ibid.). And finally, the spatial concentration would have an important role in the process of social exclusion: “This area is both the place to which the “excluded” people are segregated and the place which contributes to their exclusion” (ibid.). (Hurrle et al 2016, 552)

Having provided a description of the situation in each of the selected case studies, which stressed the high variety of conditions that were found even within the same regions, the article analyses the findings systematically in relation to these criteria in form of a table (Ibid.: 559, reproduced below). Even though the reduction of the complex reality of several localities from the same region leads naturally to simplification, this table allows to gain an overview of our analysis of the research findings in relation to the research objective.

3.1.4 Key findings and implications of the article

The analysis of localities in three different micro-regions and the city of Kolín allowed us to have a closer look on some of the places that had been identified in GAC 2015 and a number of regional mappings as socially excluded localities. Table 5 demonstrates first of all that the term is used to designate places where technical conditions and the social situation of the inhabitants vary widely.

Table 5 The analysed cases in relation to definitions used in GAC 20T06a

Case	Definitions used in GAC 2006a			Conclusion: Are the studied places SERLs in the meaning of GAC 2006a?
	a) a single building in which several individuals or families live, or a whole town district consisting of several hundreds or thousands of residents, b) inhabited by a group whose members consider themselves to be Roma and/or are considered as such by a majority of people in their neighbourhood, c) and who are socially excluded	both the place to which the "excluded" people are segregated and the place which contributes to their exclusion	frontiers of such area as important distinguishing feature, which may be both symbolic and physical and are recognised by both the inhabitants of the locality and those outside	
Kolín	a) yes (group of buildings) b) yes c) yes (with some exceptions)	Yes, inhabitants considered stigmatization of area as key problem	Yes, high level of stigmatization and negative media perception	YES
Mělnicko	a) yes b) yes c) yes	Yes, even though some residents distinguished between complaints concerning perceived discrimination and a principle satisfaction with life in their secluded community	Yes, both symbolic (both localities) and spatial (Spomyšl)	YES
Žluticko	a) a) yes b) b) yes, but Roma constituted only minority in most localities c) c) problematic claim if understood in	While the extent and effects of the concentration differ from place to place, the more important factor is the disadvantaged	Houses inhabited by Roma are locally recognised as being Roma-inhabited, yet, clear symbolic division between	Concept of SEL does not fit well in most of the cases

	relation to local majority population	geographical position of the whole municipalities	village and locality was identified only in one case (Valeč).	
Frýdlantsko	<p>a) yes</p> <p>b) yes, but Roma constituted only small minority in some of the localities</p> <p>c) in some cases problematic claim if understood in relation to local majority population, in other cases this is the case due to the strong stigmatizing effect of the locality itself</p>	<p>Frýdlant: yes</p> <p>Nové Město pod Smrkem: only in case of one neglected building</p> <p>Rural municipalities: more important factor is the disadvantaged geographical position of the whole municipalities</p>	<p>Frýdlant: yes</p> <p>Nové Město pod Smrkem: only in case of the minority of identified buildings</p> <p>Rural municipalities: relevant only in one case</p>	<p>Adequate for situation in 4 Frýdlant localities, one building in Nové Město pod Smrkem and one rural locality. It is not fully adequate in the other cases.</p>

Table originally published in Hurrle et al 2016: 559

When calculating data for individual locations, we conclude that from the 24 localities analysed in the four studied regions, 11 places did not meet the definition of SEL used in the first Gabal report (GAC 2006a). Hence, we notice the “inflationary usage of the concept” (Hurrle et al: 561) and add:

“More importantly, we found that while the ethnically neutral terminology of the term would imply that ethnicity should no longer be in the centre of attention, in practice, socially excluded localities are associated only with the concentration of Roma. This ethnic dimension is not so surprising, as the presence of Roma has been a key element in the use of the concept since its introduction. This points to a discrepancy between the symbolically used language and the real practice, which is characterised by a strong association between ethnic and social categories of Roma and social exclusion.

The introduction of the socially excluded locality into the Czech political framework was part of a general attempt to de-ethnize the practices of Roma inclusion. However, the findings from the four case studies demonstrated that the labelling of places as socially excluded localities is often not driven by a careful analysis of the inhabitants’ social situation, but by the perception of their ethnic otherness. The blending of social and ethnic criteria is supported by the vagueness of the definitions of social exclusion that is leaving space for subjective interpretations.”

(Hurrle et al 2016: 558)

While the article's findings were not necessarily meant to apply only to rural localities, it is crucial to stress the importance of the specific context in case of highly peripheral rural regions such as Žluticko and Frydlantsko. At the time of the research, poverty, unemployment and indebtedness were in the smaller municipalities of these regions clearly not limited to the inhabitants of 'localities'. As demonstrated by the indebtedness data on the municipality level presented by Hábl 2017, these problems concern at the opposite substantial parts of the local population. Where a locality-centred approach is chosen without consideration of the needs of people in a similar situation, who belong to the majority population and live outside of the locality, it is foreseeable that policy-makers will be confronted with complains about the alleged privileging of the Roma minority. Using ethnically neutral terms such as "socially excluded" and "inhabitants of socially excluded localities" will not help to address such concerns, if it is locally understood that these terms are simply new circumscriptions for Roma. Obviously, this concerns not only the actual policy plans but also - and maybe even more importantly! - the communication of these plans.

While the design and communication of policy designs is mainly a challenge for local stakeholders and their partners, such as the Agency for Social Inclusion, I would like to mention another critical aspect, which concerns the perception of poor people's position in society. When debating the concept of social exclusion, Kronauer 2010 had pointed to the negative aspect of the term's usage, which could lead to a perception where "society appears as a non-problematic unit whereas the poor are seen as 'outsiders' and 'problematic groups' "(Kronauer 2010: 18).

While Kronauer reflects on the underlying philosophy of the concept of social exclusion, the mentioned risk might be even bigger if those 'outsiders' and 'problematic groups' are defined as those living in 'problematic localities'. When directing our focus primarily on the allegedly problematic localities, we might be at risk to overestimate the otherness and troublesomeness of those living inside of these spaces, while underestimating the proliferation of the inhabitants' typical problems among the general population of disadvantaged regions. This concerns first of all indebtedness (Hábl 2017, Hurrle et al 2013c) and the difficult position on the labour market analysed in Trlifajová Hurrle 2019b (summarized below in subchapter 3.3.), but also other characteristics, which in the public discourse tend to be perceived wrongly as problems that concern exclusively those on the very margins of society.

We could illustrate this with a quotation from the situation analysis Žlutice about the problems of the education system in the small rural town:

"Interviewed teachers from the Žlutice elementary school stated that there is a relatively large, and possibly growing share of parents, who have very low ambitions in regard to their children. It is difficult to convince this sort of parents to take part in consultation hours. A significant share of parents expresses no interest at all in supporting the continuation of their children's education at a secondary school. The teachers stressed that they were talking about a general problem, which is not limited to Roma, who make up only a very small share of the children in the local school."
(Hurrle et al 2013b: 90)

Especially in the case of impoverished rural regions it seems therefore misleading to approach the issues of social exclusion and inter-ethnic relations primarily through the paradigm of the socially excluded locality. However, we should at the same time not overlook the fact that the analysis identified also a number of extremely problematic localities, which are highly segregated,

characterized by hazardous technical and hygienic conditions, and stigmatizing for their inhabitants. One example mentioned in our article, which clearly meets the definitions defined by GAC 2006a, is the case of four private rental houses inhabited exclusively by Roma (with the exception of one non-Roma family) in the town of Frýdlant:

“Originally city property, these houses were privatized in 2005 to the highest offer. The owner acquired similar properties also in other municipalities in the Liberec Region. At the time of our field work (2014), the houses in Frýdlant were in disrepair and offered very bad hygienic conditions. While paying very high rent for substandard housing, tenants complained about disrespectful treatment from their landlord.” (Hurrle et al 2016: 556)

Another case mentioned in the article are the settlements in Spomyšl and Horní Počaply, two municipalities in the surroundings of Mělník:

In regard to the technical infrastructure, both localities are known to belong to the most underdeveloped in Czechia. At the time of our field investigation (2012), both sites included a combination of formal and informal housing structures built with simple methods from various materials. The living conditions are dangerous for the health of the inhabitants. In the case of Spomyšl there were serious problems with the quality of drinking water; in Horní Počaply many of the inhabited structures offered in winter only minimal protection against the cold. (Hurrle et al 2016: 554).

While there is a great variety in the conditions even in these most extreme cases, it is obvious that for the people living in these conditions the locality is indeed a central factor, which greatly influences their live opportunities and determines to a considerable degree their relationship to the surrounding community. From the point of view of public policy, the handling of such places - whether as a strategy for evacuation and relocation of the inhabitants or a plan for the gradual improvement of living conditions - requires specific knowledge and tools. Consequently, we do not plead in the article for the abolishment of the entire concept and acknowledge its value for place-based policy intervention:

“The research confirmed that there are highly stigmatized places of involuntary territorial confinement with deteriorating technical and poor hygienic conditions, which require specific attention. Social exclusion has many dimensions and spatial concentration and segregation of socially excluded is a crucial aspect that strengthens the other dimensions. The negative impact of living in these socio-spatial formations thus requires the use of specific place-based measures in addition to broader and universal social policies to effectively tackle the root causal mechanisms of the exclusion process.” (Hurrle et al 2016: 561)

As the research revealed a contrast between ethnically neutral language and its understanding in the Czech discourse and practice, we further recommend to openly acknowledge the ethnical

dimension:

“We suggest that studies of such localities, which are explicitly dealing with Roma, shall directly refer to socially excluded Roma localities. At the same time, the concept shall be also open for application to such socio-spatial formations, whose inhabitants are socially excluded, while not necessarily being Roma. This for instance concerns spatial concentrations of migrant workers or geographically isolated settlements with a high proportion of senior citizen. Yet even in those cases, where the usage of the term SEL/SERL is appropriate, we should be aware of the fact that the designation as socially excluded (Roma) locality brings additional stigma for the place and its inhabitants.” (Ibid: 562).

3.2 What is driving the emergence of new localities in rural areas?

3.2.1 Findings from desk research and case studies

One of the most important findings of the last mapping of socially excluded localities GAC 2015 has been the trend towards a de-urbanization of social exclusion. Are we witnessing the emergence of a new meta pattern of social exclusion, which combines segregation on the local level with a concentration in the most disadvantaged and peripheral regions? As small municipalities in rural areas tend to have limited capacities and offer limited employment and educational opportunities, such a scenario would most likely result in the deepening of the exclusion of Roma and other marginalised groups.

While the possibility of such a scenario should be worrying, it is necessary to say at the same time that the data from GAC 2006a and GAC 2015 are not sufficient for deciding if we can truly identify an emerging trend. As demonstrated in Hurrell et al 2016, the term “socially excluded locality” has been applied without a clear definition of the inhabitants’ status of social exclusion, which gave the research team and its local co-operators considerable space for subjective judgement. Even though in practice also GAC 2015 focused only on localities where at least some of the inhabitants are Roma, it is also unclear if the leaving out of Roma ethnicity as one of the defining characteristics in case of GAC 2015 influenced the mapping results. Another factor that could have influenced the data is the growth of knowledge about the topic in the period between both mappings, which was supported by the establishment of the Agency for Social Inclusion and its activities both in the area of co-ordination and the realization of applied research. It seems plausible that with growing knowledge researchers became more aware of smaller localities in more remote areas. Another serious limitation of the data is the lack of information about migratory patterns. The data set allows us to identify new localities, but it does not tell us from where the inhabitants of the new locations were coming from.

While we should hence be careful to not base our argument solely on the data from the national mapping, there are also good reasons for assuming that a poverty-driven shift from cities to rural areas is a serious possibility. The low accessibility of housing for poor households in the Czech Republic has been well-documented (Platforma pro sociální bydlení LUMOS 2019). As outlined in the introduction, we also know that the limited access to regular housing in combination with a relatively generous system of housing benefits created conditions for the emergence of businesses specializing on the accommodation of the poor. Given this context, it seems reasonable to assume

that the low prices of real estate and the opportunities created by foreclosure sales provide a powerful incentive for such businesses to operate in peripheral rural areas. In preparatory interviews with local stakeholders and experts from the Agency for Social Inclusion in the early phase of the dissertation project, I was told anecdotes about businessmen who owned dozens of houses in peripheral municipalities all over the country that seemed to confirm the existence of such a trend.

I hence assumed that the realization of case studies in the selected micro-regions in combination with anecdotal evidence from other regions would allow to formulate a hypothesis, which would link the emergence of new localities with a distinct migratory pattern. However, this expectation was not met. As has been mentioned already in the previous sub-chapter, the research revealed a very large variety of conditions, not only in regard to technical conditions, but also concerning the narratives of the transformation of normal places into 'localities' and the migratory patterns within the analysed regions. While we encountered for example examples of Roma who had moved from a city to the countryside, we learnt also about cases of Roma heading in the opposite direction.

While it seemed not possible to explain these movements with one underlying theory, the field research in the selected rural locations revealed nevertheless a number of repeating patterns that are important stones in the emerging explanatory model:

Finding 1: No indications for migration of larger scale from outside of the region

The research mapped several cases of the dissemination of rumours concerning the migration of Roma from places such as the notorious Chanov settlement in Most, which were in some cases even officially demented by the local authorities (e.g. Hurrle et al 2013b: 99). However, the research did in none of the analysed localities identify a larger scale movement of people from other regions or even larger cities from the same region. Even though the housing situation in cities for low-income households from the Roma minority is very complicated, respondents from larger cities made clear that for Roma who grew up in a large city the cultural barrier of moving to a peripheral village is extremely high:

“Moving to a place like Žlutice is really not an option for our clients. They would definitely rather opt for a hostel-type of accommodation here in the city, even if conditions aren't good. The countryside is a very different world for them, they would lack their contacts. They are simply not used to this.” (respondent from social department in Karlovy Vary)

While life for Roma on the rural countryside is different than life in the city, the same applies obviously also in the other direction. Many of the old-settled Roma from villages stated in interviews that they would not want to exchange the village for life in the city, arguing first of all with the higher security and the absence of racist threats.

Finding 2: Roma in the locality tend to be perceived as being more foreign than they actually are

During the research in the selected micro-regions and municipalities, the researchers were relatively often presented with the notion of a divided Roma community, which includes on the

one hand side non-problematic local Roma (often, but not always, living outside of the house or area described as the locality) and the “more problematic” foreign Roma, who would have moved to the municipality only recently. In many cases, this was stated about the people living in the locality.

However, as demonstrates this quotation from our situation analysis for the Frýdlantsko micro-region, in many cases this picture had to be revised after having mapped the actual trajectories of the localities’ inhabitants:

“The more detailed analysis of the origins of the inhabitants of individual houses showed though that the division between (spatially integrated) local Roma and alien Roma living in segregated localities is an over-simplified interpretation of the situation. Most of the interviewed inhabitants of individual houses are either local or have at least strong family ties to members of the local community. It seems that the perception of certain places and its inhabitants as alien could be strongly influenced by single anecdotal cases, which are not representative for the rest of the inhabitants. The perception of the Roma as alien speaks further of the worsening of their overall position in the region and of an increased perception of ethnic otherness. The visibly bad technical condition and the highly problematic housing conditions in some of the objects (mostly in Frýdlant in the case of objects owned by Mr. Urban) further strengthens the perception of the inhabitants as foreign (disorganized, dirty), even though a substantial group of the inhabitants of these houses are long-term citizen, who originally have lived in the municipal housing stock.” (Hurrle et al 2015: 36)

While there were certainly differences between regions and between individual municipalities, the overall impression gained from the interviews with local inhabitants was that the relationships between Roma and non-Roma in the rural municipalities in Frýdlantsko and Žluticko were during socialism good. The good quality of inter-ethnic relations in the very small and rural municipalities confirmed also other indicators, such as high number of inter-racial marriages or partnerships. In Šluknovsko, where even rural municipalities had at that time an industrial character, interview partners described the relations even during socialism as less harmonic, but significantly better than they are now. In the studied two rural municipalities in Mělnicko, the history of the settlement began only in the 1990s.

While Roma who are long-term residents of rural municipalities described the attitude towards the local Roma in the village as better and their overall situation as more secure than in case of the more anonymous cities, interviewed Roma nevertheless complained that the factor race did began to change the attitude of the majority population. In the case of smaller rural towns such as Frýdlant, where human relations are already more anonymous than in the case of villages, this gradual alienation seems to have cumulated in the emergence of stigmatized locations, whose inhabitants are no longer perceived to be part of the local community.

Finding 3: Emergence of cyclic migrants

We already mentioned in the introduction the findings by Kafková et al 2012, which did not confirm popular claims about mass migration of Roma to the region of Šluknovsko. The study pointed instead to the permanent migration of a smaller group of households, which were without permanent housing and moved regularly between the municipalities in the micro-region. This led

to the impression that constantly new people are arriving in the region.

Our research in the Žluticko and Frýdlantsko micro-region confirmed the existence of the same phenomena in these micro-regions. Local interview partners considered ‘cyclic migrants’ as a mayor problem, which had entirely destabilized some places. Cyclic migrants were described as notorious defaulter, who would travel from location to location, leaving behind not only unpaid invoices, but often also destroyed furniture. While our attempt to reconstruct some of these cases revealed that they were talking about a real phenomenon, which at the time of our research in fact existed, it also showed that the total number of households belonging to this problematic group is small. In the case of Žluticko, the total number of families was at the time of our research probably not higher than ten (Hurrle et al. 2013: 86). While the movement of these cyclic migrants seem to have been limited to Žluticko and the neighbouring Toužimsko micro-regions (with similar characteristics), in the case of Frýdlantsko the interviewed local stakeholders reported also of short-term stays of people from the larger cities in the Liberec Region, Liberec and Jablonec nad Nisou. Apparently, they did not move to rural objects in the rural settlements of Bulovka and Bulovka-Arnoltovice with the intension of staying permanently, but used these places as temporarily housing solutions. In most cases, the ongoing migration, and the problems linked to this problem, were associated with indebtedness.

Some interview partners were describing the objects frequented by this type of tenants as “connecting stations”, into which socially excluded people move due to the lack of other possibilities and from where they leave shortly afterwards – to similar places, or to places that offer better opportunities for permanent living. While such “connecting stations” do certainly exist also in urban areas, it seems that the disadvantages of the rural location are less relevant in the case of these types of locations where tenants will stay only for a short time. In some cases, these temporary locations that were usually not larger than one tenement house seemed to operate as a business model of private owners (Bulovka in Frýdlantsko micro-region, Vrbno pod Pradědem in Bruntálsko micro-region); in another case the situation was more similar to a squat, with an owners who at the time of our research had both stopped to collect rent and to care about the maintenance of the building (Bochov-Údrč, Žluticko micro-region). Some of the rural houses that are owned by some of the socially-excluded inhabitants seemed to fulfil a similar function. Municipal representatives declared that in some of these houses there is a very high number of people registered for permanent residency (e.g. Bulovka-Arnoltovice, Bochov-Herštošice).

Finding 4: The welfare system does not reward urban-rural migration

Most of the interviewed inhabitants of the visited localities in the five micro-regions are recipients of various forms of state social support (mainly social assistance, housing benefits). Becoming increasingly aware to what extend the regulations of these systems influence the options of socially excluded citizen, the research in the selected municipalities triggered a desire to better understand the very complex system and its implications for integration in the housing and labour markets. While the critical reflection of this relationship is the subject of subchapter 3.3, this analysis has also implications for the emergence of migration patterns. Our analysis of the system made clear that the emergence of socially excluded localities in rural municipalities can probably not be explained as an urban-rural movement that is simply driven by the lower housing costs. While rent costs in rural municipalities certainly tend to be cheaper in villages than in urban centres, the rules of the social state do not create financial incentives for moving of welfare recipients from cities to the countryside. The Labour Office, which is responsible for the payment of social assistance and housing benefits, accepts housing costs only to certain thresholds. There exist two types of thresholds – the so-called ‘normative housing costs’ and the ‘locally common

rent costs'. While the first is used for the calculation of the 'contribution for housing', the second one for the calculation of the 'supplementary housing benefit'. While the contribution for housing is a relatively universal benefit, the second type of benefit is relevant mostly for the poorest group of citizen. While the methodology differs, in the case of both benefits the Labour Office would in rural municipalities accept only lower housing costs than in larger cities. These locally defined thresholds and the methodology for the calculation of social assistance (*dávky v hmotné nouzi*), which is based on the principle that after payment of housing a household should have not more income than the living minimum, counter-balances in the case of welfare recipients potential savings from lower rent costs.

While the move to the countryside might from this perspective appear cost-neutral, it is necessary to notice that the welfare system does not compensate inhabitants from peripheral municipalities for travel to the local branch office of the Labour office and other public institutions, to doctors, to work or to school. As such travel costs can sum up to significant positions in the monthly family budget, life on the countryside does not appear like an economically sound choice. This is especially true for life in very small municipalities without basic infrastructure, where inhabitants need to cover transportation costs even to attend elementary school or attend mandatory consultations in the local branch office of Labour Office. Another rural extra-cost is the higher cost of food in local shops. In the case of Žluticko micro-region, most of the interviewed Roma stated to realize large grocery shopping due to the significant cost-difference only in the large supermarkets of Karlovy Vary. This meant additional costs for gas and the informal lending of cars.

3.2.2 Trlifajová Hurrle 2019a – introduction to the article and its research objectives

The findings from the case studies summarized above allow us to develop an idea about the dynamic of changes that have led to the reported increase of rural localities in GAC 2015. Yet the micro-regions included as case studies contain only a fraction of all rural localities in the Czech Republic. As the research observed significant varieties of patterns even among these regions, it would be problematic to stem our explanation of the overall development only on the empirical findings from a limited number of localities. In order to enlarge the scope of data, I decided to realize together with my colleague Lucie Trlifajová a survey among all rural municipalities (defined for this purpose as municipalities with less than 5000 inhabitants) where GAC 2015 had identified socially excluded localities. In addition to this, a second survey with a different set of questions was sent to the heads of social departments in the larger municipalities (ORP) of the concerned regions, which exercise delegated state power in relation to the small municipalities contacted in the first survey.

Seeking to explain the significant increase of the number of rural localities, we formulated as hypotheses three different explanations that were derived from the analysis of data, observations in the five studied micro-regions and the analysis of the local media discourse:

"The first explanation is involuntary migration from cities to peripheral rural municipalities. The driving factor for this process could be both the non-accessibility of housing on the commercial housing market and policies of certain local self-governments, which seek to push unpopular groups out of their own territory. The best-known example for such a politically controlled removal from a town to distant villages in a peripheral location occurred in 2006 in the town of Vsetín under the rule of mayor

Jiří Čuněk, who moved a number of families to villages in the Jeseník region (Vomastková 2011).

The second alternative explanation assumes that the emergence of new localities is the result of delayed processes of segregation and concentration within rural environments. We hence speak of processes, which occurred in the case of urban environments earlier or where at least more visible than in the case of rural areas. In the case of the selected micro-regions, we had learnt about such a development for examples in the case of the Žluticko micro-region, where a number of locations were identified by local officials as socially excluded localities. Most of the inhabitants of these locations were Roma. The inhabitants of these localities are locally perceived as people who had come from somewhere else. However, the interviews with these inhabitants revealed that most of them were from the same micro-region, where they and their parents had lived in the past in more integrated forms of housing (Hurrle, Kučera, Trlifajová 2013). In some of these cases, the emergence of the excluded locality was the result of the privatization of housing and the segmentarization of the local housing market. In the case of other locations, the emergence of the 'locality' was the result of the emptying of housing capacities in consequence of the depopulation of small municipalities with limited work opportunities.

Our third explanation for the increasing number of rural localities focuses on the improving quality of data. The knowledge about the issue of social exclusion improved considerably during the last decade. This is first of all the result of the founding of the Agency for Social Inclusion, which realized a large number of studies on the situation in a large number of municipalities and regions. For this reason, it seems likely that some of the "new" rural municipalities are of an older data as suggests the comparison of GAC 2006a and GAC 2015. This consideration is also supported by information gathered on the history of some of the localities in the selected micro-regions." (Trlifajová Hurrle 2019a: 213)

Based on the findings from the case studies, we assumed that all of these explanations are relevant. The surveys among all municipalities concerned was expected to provide the quantitative data needed to recognize the relative importance of each of these explanations.

3.2.3 Research methodology

Based on the experience gained in earlier research projects, it was clear that different institutions tend to have quite different views on the situation of the inhabitants of socially excluded localities. While representatives of small municipalities tend to know the genesis of a location, its technical condition, and the ownership, they often have limited information about the inhabitants and their social situation. Especially in cases of localities, where inhabitants change frequently and do not seek permanent residence status, there is little reasons for direct interaction with official representatives of the municipality (in very small municipalities usually the mayor). While the local branch offices of the Czech Labour Office (responsible for the payment of all welfare payments) would also be an excellent source of information, it tends to be difficult to obtain qualitative data from this highly hierarchical organisation. Hence the decision to address with two

different questionnaires two different institutions – small municipalities with less than 5000 inhabitants included in the GAC 2015 study and the social departments of larger municipalities, which are responsible for a number of functions also towards those smaller municipalities. This part of the research was realized in summer 2016.

The first online survey with questions focussing on concrete localities and the origin of its inhabitants was sent by email to the official contact information of all 144 municipalities with less than 5000 inhabitants, where GAC 2015 had identified socially excluded localities. The response rate for this questionnaire was 52,7 %. The response rate among municipalities included already in the GAC 2006a mapping was slightly higher (55 %) than among municipalities listed in GAC 2015 for the first time (51 %). While the responding municipalities had almost exactly the same average size than the non-responding municipalities (1826 inhabitants as opposed to 1839), the average size of the socially excluded population was larger than in case of municipalities that did not respond (average population of 110, as opposed to 75). While this might indicate that municipalities with a larger socially excluded population were more motivated to fill out the questionnaire, the analysis of the response pattern does not reveal any systematic bias that would put the survey's representativeness into question. Interestingly, there have been a few respondents who declared that they do not agree with the term “socially excluded locality” and two cases where the respondents declared that the question of social exclusion in their municipality would rather not be an ethnic question, but based on social issues such as long-term unemployment.

The second questionnaire was sent to 67 heads of the social departments of larger municipalities (so-called municipalities of extended scope of activity (ORP)), which exercise delegated state power also on the territory of the smaller municipalities included in the GAC 2015 survey. In the social field, this concerns mainly the Office for the Protection of Children Rights (OSPOD) and the social curator for adults dealing with the reintegration of released inmates. While it is not possible to expect people from the social departments in the larger cities to know in detail the situation in certain rural localities, the decision to address the social departments was based on the assumption that at they would have to address housing emergencies of poor citizen from the whole region. Therefore, we assumed that they might have a good overview about housing options for vulnerable people in the whole region. Learning more about the housing market from the perspective of the poorest and most discriminated seemed crucial to explain migratory movements, which seem to play an important role in the story behind the emergence of new rural localities. The response rate for this questionnaire was 91,0 %.

3.2.4 Key findings and implications of the article

While the full article with a detailed discussion of the obtained data can be found in the appendix to this dissertation report, the following summary focuses on those findings that are most relevant to the formulated hypotheses and the overall objectives of my dissertation project.

Finding 1: Rural localities emerge in places where Roma have been present traditionally

The presence of Roma is not a new phenomenon in the majority of rural municipalities with socially excluded localities participating in the survey – in more than 80 % of the municipalities that filled out the questionnaire Roma have been living at least since the 1990s and in two thirds Roma were present already during the socialist period. On the opposite, only about ten percent of

municipalities declared that the presence of Roma began only in the last few years.

While Roma have been living in most rural municipalities for many years, it is necessary to distinguish from this the history of the emergence of localities:

“The interviewed mayors connected the existence of certain problematic houses or areas, ‘localities’, and the worsening of problems connected to them mostly to the period since the 1990s and especially the last two decades. These data do only partly correspond with the results of GAC 2015, which identified a strong rise of the number of rural localities only in the last decade. If looking only on those municipalities where localities had been identified only in GAC 2015 (but not in GAC 2006a), we learn that in 60 % of municipalities according to the mayors the socially excluded locality has existed already for more than ten years. While the authors of GAC 2015 perceived the rising number of rural localities as a new phenomenon, it becomes clear from the survey that in many cases we cannot really speak of a new phenomenon. Instead we seem to be confronted with the result of gradual processes, which over time have become more visible and were for that reason identified systematically only relatively recently.” (Trlifajová Hurrle 2019a: 216)

Finding 2: Migration as factor that supported emergence of locality

When asked about factors that started the transformation of a normal part of the municipality into a ‘locality’, almost eighty per cent of mayors identified migration of Roma from other municipalities as a very important or important factor. Other factors that were considered by a large share of people very important or important are changes of property structures (66 % of respondents), the worsening of the inhabitants’ socio-economic situation (58 %) and the worsening of the technical conditions of the building making up the locality (47 %). Relatively less important factors mentioned by the respondents was the out-migration of former inhabitants (41 %) and the rapid emptying of housing capacities (33 %). However, also in the case of the two less often mentioned factors there was a significant group of municipalities where these factors were considered very important (12, respectively 10 municipalities; N=65).

While the arrival of Roma from other municipalities was considered to be the single most important factor, the above-described experiences from Žluticko and Frýdlantsko should remind us to distinguish in regard to this question between perception and reality. While we can assume that the appearance of Roma from other municipalities contributed to the perception of the locality as alien space, the emergence of localities in locations where Roma have been living traditionally indicates that the emergence of the locality is also the result of a changing position of the local Roma in the local community.

Finding 3: Migration patterns

Respondents in both surveys – representatives of rural municipalities and officers of regional

social departments – declared that most of the migration occurs *within* the same region. Both groups of respondents agreed that migration of poor people from large cities from outside the region is an exceptional phenomenon. Migration from abroad, which respondents linked in comments with the return migration of Czech Roma from Great Britain, was considered a more common phenomenon than migration from Prague.

During the field research, the issue of return migration from Great Britain was mentioned only in the case of Krasná Lída (Šluknovsko micro-region), where the interviewed mayor expressed concerns about the purchases of houses by returning Roma migrants from Great Britain, who were originally from other places in the region. In some of the regions, we encountered also a number of Roma who were originally from Prague and had come to the peripheral regions already during the 1990s.

It is clear from this data that migration occurs mostly within regions (kraje) and even more typically within micro-regions that have their own urban sub-centres. In the case of our selected regions, this sub-centres are towns like Žlutice, Bruntál, Rumburk, or Frýdlant. The data from both surveys revealed however differences in regard to the overall pattern. Whereas the respondents from the small municipalities pointed to the existence of migration of socially excluded / Roma from nearby towns to their municipalities, the respondents from the regional social departments mentioned more often migration of people from these groups in the opposite direction – from villages to the city! We should mention at this point that neither municipalities nor social departments are likely to possess exact statistical data on this issue. The different interpretation of the predominant migratory pattern is therefore likely the result of a difference in perspective. We can assume that public officers are more aware of people who arrive in a municipality than of people who leave, which in many cases will happen without being noticed.

While this ambiguity in the survey data does not allow us to draw a clear conclusion if rural-urban migration or urban-rural migration is the more dominant phenomenon, it allows us to conclude that both directions are at least in certain regions significant. The export of social problems from the city to marginalized villages is hence only one aspect of the poverty-related migratory patterns that link regional centres with their rural surroundings.

Interviewed social workers also stressed that rural regions tend to lack facilities for the dealing with emergency situations, such as violence within the family. In the case of Frýdlantsko, clients in such situations have to be sent to places like Liberec or Jablonec nad Nisou as there is no asylum house within the micro-region. Even though these services are of temporarily character, they might nevertheless be the starting point of a rural-urban migration trajectory.

The function of the urban centres as a destination of last resort in situations of crisis was also mentioned by the mayor of Mělník, Ctirad Mikeš, when explaining why the city of Mělník should be proactive and care about the improvement of conditions in two settlements in the municipalities of Spomyšl and Horní Počaply, where conditions were at the time of our research (2011) very problematic:

“If something happens in these places, and people cannot stay there, who will have to deal with their situation? The rural municipalities do not have the capacities for this, so logically the people will come to us and ask for help. It is therefore in our self-interest to invest into prevention of such problems.” (interview 2012)

However, the research identified also situations where the trend went into the opposite direction. In the case of Šluknovsko, the urban centres within the micro-region tried to improve the work of

the police in order to tackle the alleged problem with criminality, which had triggered the protests in the summer of 2011 mentioned in the introduction to this dissertation. According to the interviewed mayors from the town of Rumburk and the rural municipality of Staré Křečany, these operations would have pushed 'problematic people' from the cities to the countryside. As mentioned already in the introduction, according to one respondent from the region the same happened more recently on a much larger scale in consequence of the introduction of zones where it is no longer possible to claim the type of housing benefits that is paid to the poorest people (expert interview Rumburk 2018). In the case of Frýdlantsko, the head of the social department in Nové Město pod Smrkem, declared that she observed both waves of moves from villages to the towns in the micro-region and waves in the opposite direction:

"To me it seems that suddenly a certain idea is spreading around these types of clients. For example, the claim that the Labour Office in Frýdlant is more benevolent in providing support for things like a washing machine, than our office here in Nové Město. Or for a while clients were telling me, it is better in the villages, it is cheaper there, people are more friendly. But after some time they are back in town, telling me: – You know, there is nothing to do in these places, and the bus is expensive...."

(interview 2015)

Finding 4: Cyclic migration and the destabilization of localities

This observation brings us back to the issue of repeated or cyclic migration, which we discussed already above on the basis of findings from the case studies. The survey among respondents from the social departments confirmed the high importance of this phenomenon for many rural regions. We assume that the stronger accent on this phenomenon by the respondents from the social departments is again a question of perspective. Whereas the rural municipality notices if there is fluctuation in a locality or not, the social department is more likely to be familiar with the long-term trajectory of their clients.

The article further discusses how a high fluctuation rate alters the character of the locality and the human relationship within the locality and between the locality and its surroundings:

"The importance of repeated migration is underlined by another result of the survey. The arrival of new-comers is usually not a single phenomenon, which changes the character and perception of a given locality. Instead a higher than average- fluctuation rate has turned into a dominant feature of a large share of rural localities. While 40 % of respondents assessed the fluctuation rate as comparably with the rest of the municipality, 41 % declared it to be higher than average and 11 % as high. In the case of four per cent of municipalities, the fluctuation rate was considered extremely high."

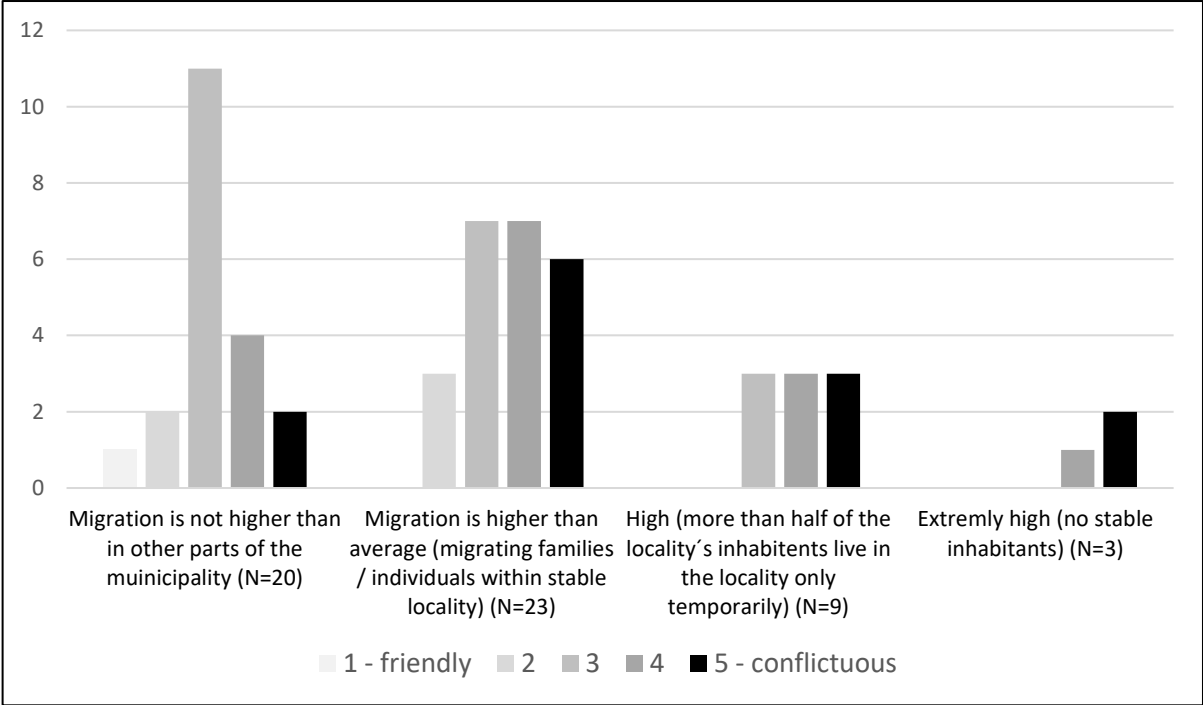
(Trlifajová Hurrle 2019a: 212-213)

The analysis shows at the same time that in the vast majority of municipalities (more than 80 % of those participating in the survey), the majority of the inhabitants of the locality is perceived as

being stable. If we connect this information with the above-mentioned negative perception of newcomers, we should ask the question to what extent the migration of a relatively small group of people can lead to a locality’s destabilization or at least to its perception as problematic place.

The relationship between fluctuation of tenants on the one side, and the perception of the quality of relations with the inhabitants of the locality on the other hand, is illustrated by figure 6. Whereas representatives of municipalities with low fluctuation perceived the quality of relations as neutral or even friendly, a higher fluctuation is connected with conflicts. This is true even in the case of localities, where the majority of inhabitants is stable and migration was connected with a limited number of individuals or households (figure 6).

Figure 6: How fluctuation of inhabitants influences and the quality of relations (N=54, municipalities)



Source: Author’s survey, originally published in Trlifajová Hurrle 2019a: 219

Finding 5: Factors that drive migration

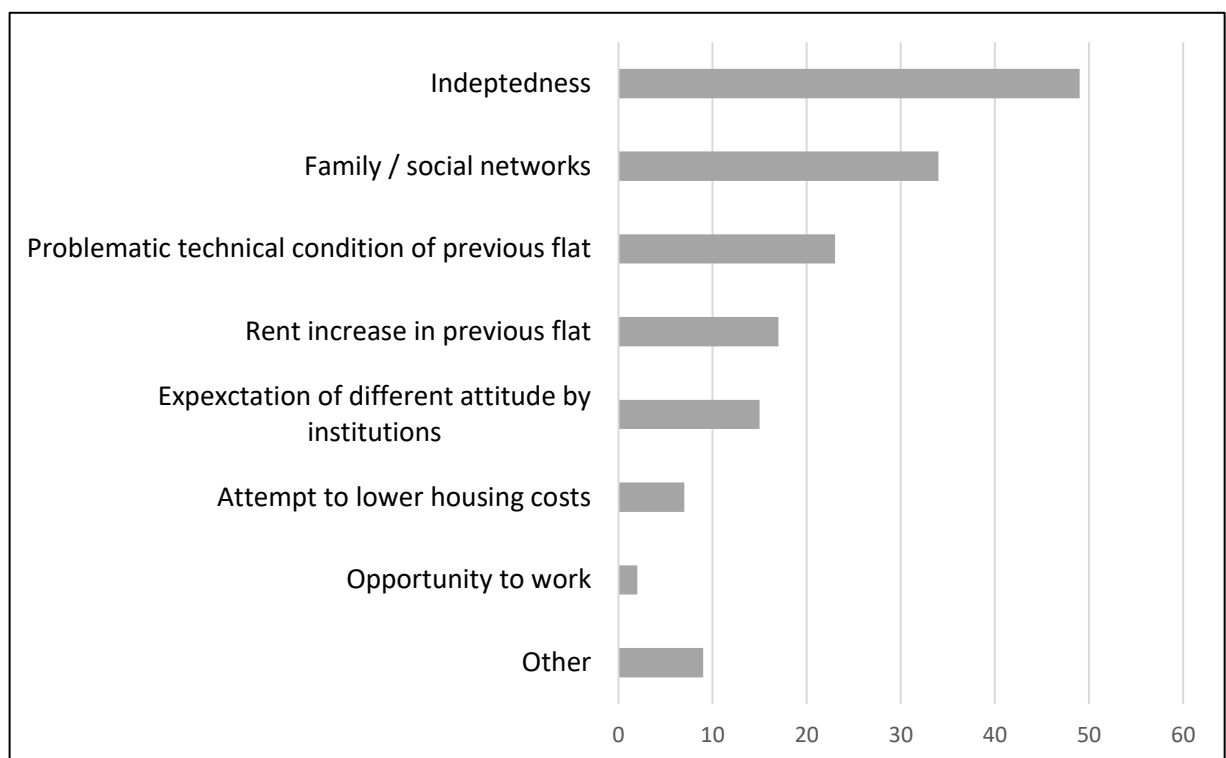
As we identified fluctuation of inhabitants as a crucial factor, which negatively influences the perception of localities and its inhabitants, we should ask which factors are causing the migration:

“The vast majority of respondents (89 %) from social departments identified indebtedness as driving factor. Indebtedness is also connected to the already mentioned cyclic migration. In a comment, one of the respondents from the social departments speaks of the “moving of problematic families from one flat to the next flat, at which point none of them tries to resolve debts from their earlier place of living.”

(Ibid.: 215)

In addition to indebtedness, figure 11 lists family / social networks (56 %), the problematic technical conditions of previous flats (38 %), rent increases in previous flat (28 %), expectation of different attitude by institutions (25 %), attempt to lower housing costs (11 %) and work opportunities (3 %) as driving factors. As the threat of poverty-driven migration has sometimes been explained with lower housing costs, it is interesting to see the relatively low importance of this factor. As outlined above, this is the consequence of the effects of the welfare state.

Figure 7: Most common reasons for the moving of poor Roma and persons threatened by social exclusion? (N=60, social departments)



Source: Author's survey, originally published in Trlifajová Hurrle 2019a: 215

In our article, we try to relate the data from figure 7 to the traditional distinction in the study of migration between push- and pull factors:

If we look on all the driving factors [...], we see that push factors (= factors that exercise pressure to leave) significantly dominate over pull factors (factors that attract individuals or family to a given location). Migration is hence connected to factors as the bad condition of currently occupied housing and rising costs of rent. (Ibid: 216)

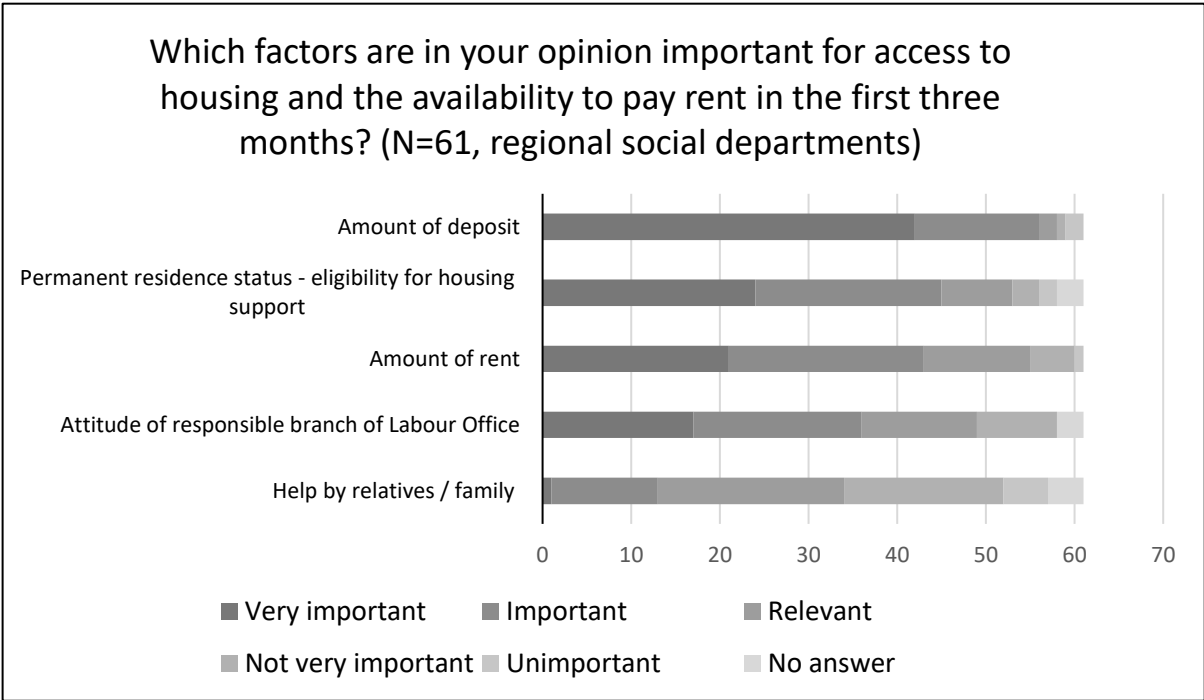
Yet even more important than this are family structures. The importance of this factor might help

to explain why most segregated Roma localities emerged in municipalities where Roma have been present already traditionally. Even though the arrival of new people from other municipalities contributed to the emergence of new localities, this process apparently unfolds in a way that made use of existing family connections.

While the questions debated to this point allowed us to gain some idea about the processes that drive people under certain circumstances into rural localities, it is still not clear what exactly offer these localities in comparison to other places. While public debates on the affordability of housing focus usually on the costs of rent, the responding heads of social departments mentioned this only at the third place. However, at the first place is the cost of the deposit (figure 8). While the Czech social system is prepared to cover costs of rent to the already mentioned thresholds, the state had overlooked the deposit as a factor that limits accessibility of housing for a long time. Most of the interview partners living in rural localities met during the field research had difficulties to cover their monthly needs and were hence not able to save the equivalent of several monthly rents to pay for a deposit. In addition to this, recipients of social assistance (*dávky v hmotné nouzi*) are not even allowed to legally possess such financial reserves. This is true even for welfare recipients, who receive these benefits as a supplement to income from wage labour. The same applies for debtors with wage seizure.

At the time of the research, the Ministry for Social Affairs had given the Labour Offices the possibility to support poor clients in certain situations also with the payment of deposits. However, according to our survey, at the time of our research the Labour Offices did make use of this possibility only in half of the regions (or half of the social departments did at least not know about such a practice). According to the Agency for Social Inclusion’s housing expert Roman Matoušek the policy of covering costs for deposits was at the time of the survey indeed limited to regions where housing problems had been identified as most serious.

Figure 8: Factors that influence access to housing



Source: Author’s survey, originally published in Trlifajová Hurrle 2019a: 215

The dependency on the welfare system is visible also in case of other factors that were identified as being important by the respondents of social departments. The second most important factor mentioned is the possibility to register own's permanent residence in the flat. Permanent residency status is a precondition to be eligible for the more universal type of housing benefit (*příspěvek na bydlení*). While holders of a regular lease do not require agreement of their landlord to gain residence status, this is the case in case of subletting contracts and hostel-type accommodations. While the cost of the rent is on the third place, the attitude of the responsible Labour Office is still considered very important or important by more than 60 % of respondents.

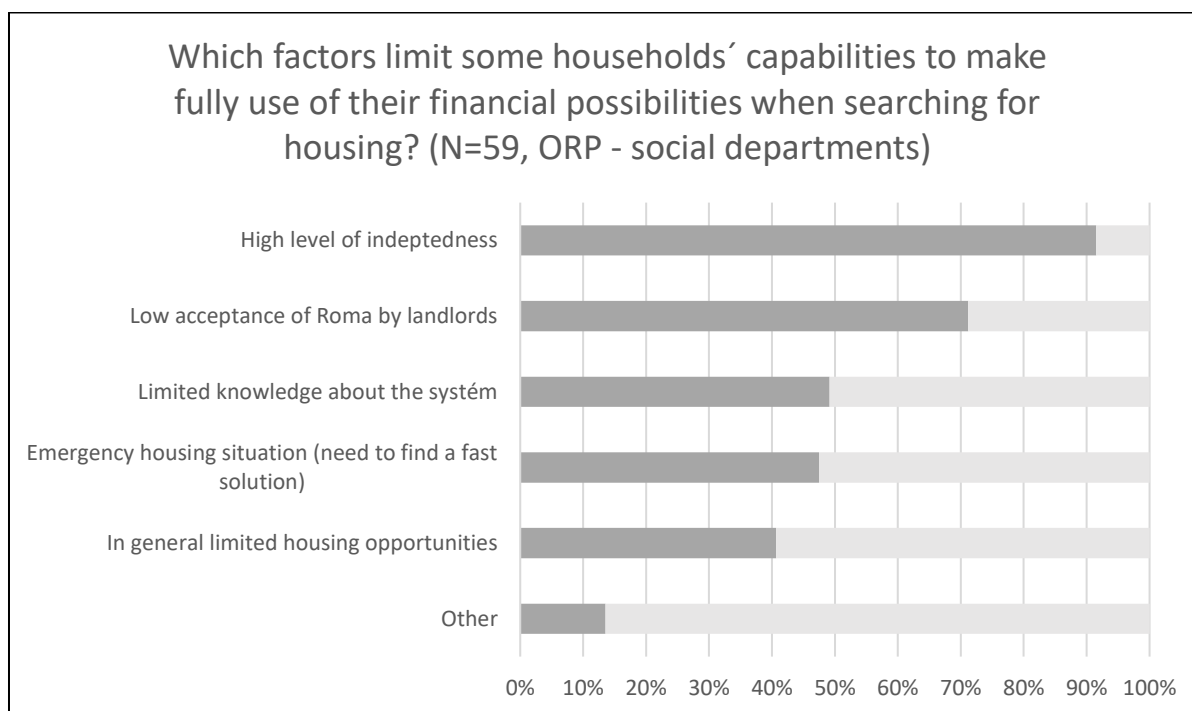
Finding 6: Parallel housing market

Summarizing the answers on a number of questions related to the position of Roma on the regional housing market, we try to explain why Roma end up in segregated sub-standard housing even though the Czech system of housing benefits had been created with the intention to ensure that also households with low income will be able to afford housing. As outlined already, one crucial factor for this is indebtedness:

“According to the respondents, a high degree of indebtedness is not only a driving factor for the (repeated) migration discussed above, but limits also significantly the possibility to use own's financial possibilities when searching housing. Another very significant factor is the very limited accessibility of housing for Roma, and, more generally, persons threatened by social exclusion. [...] According to the experience of the social departments participating in our survey the accessibility of rent housing is dramatically worse in the case of these groups than in case of the general population. The accessibility is limited even in the case of regions where housing capacities are in general sufficient. This points to a high level of discrimination on the housing market, which represents an important barrier for households that are threatened by social exclusion.” (Ibid.: 216)

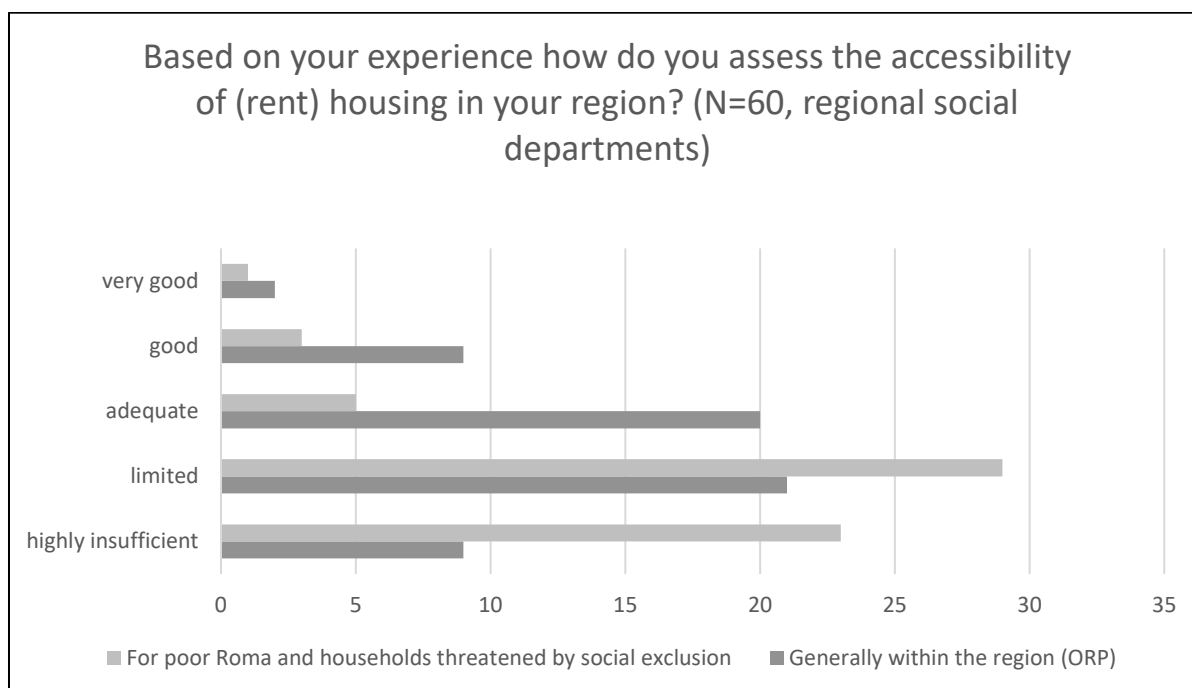
Various aspects of the very difficult position of the Roma on the regional housing markets is shown in figures 9,10 and 11, which are based on answers by the contacted social departments. While figures 9 and 10 point to the discrimination against Roma as a major factor that limits the access to rent housing outside of localities, figure 11 describes to what extent housing for Roma and socially excluded citizen has specific characteristics. Taken together, we interpreted in our article the answers to these questions as “strong indications for the existence of a parallel, sub-standard market for Roma and persons threatened by social exclusion” (Ibid.: 217).

Figure 9: Non-financial barriers on the housing market



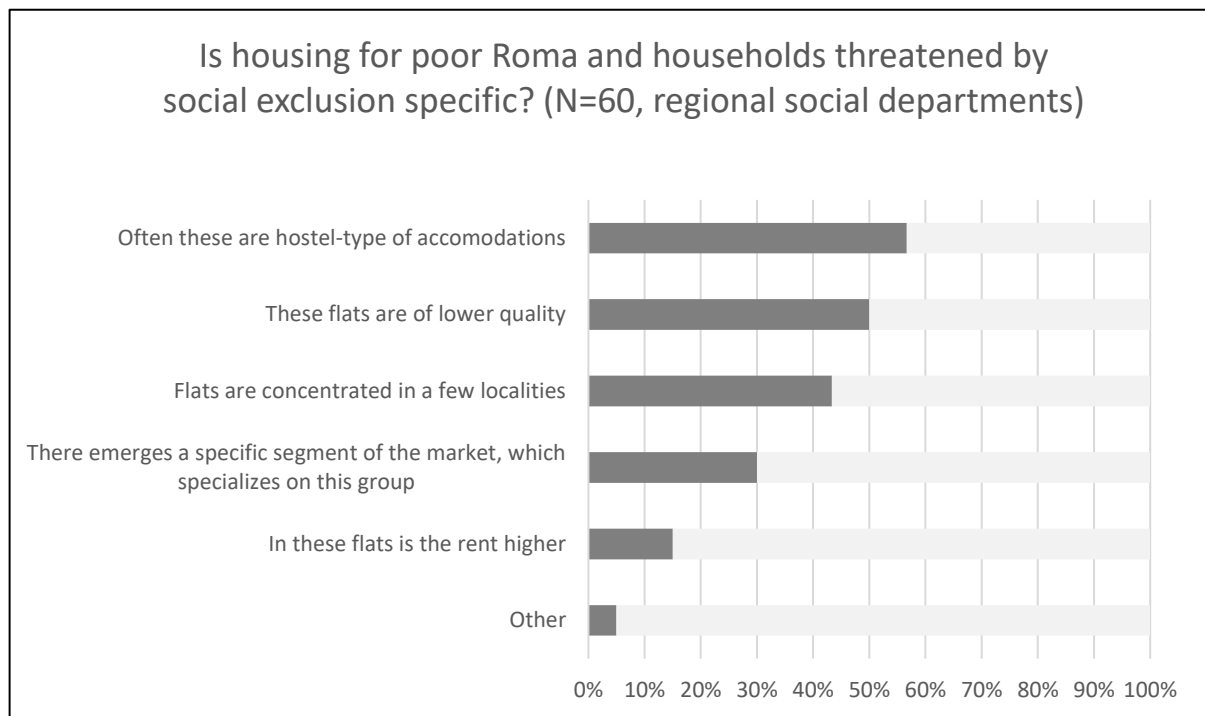
Source: Author's survey, originally published in Trlifajová Hurrle 2019a: 217

Figure 10: Accessibility of rent housing on the regional (ORP) level



Source: Author's survey, originally published in Trlifajová Hurrle 2019a: 218

Figure 11: Characteristic features of housing for poor Roma and households threatened by social exclusion according to regional social departments



Source: Author's survey, originally published in Trlifajová Hurrle 2019a: 219

How can we describe the functioning of this parallel housing market in the case of localities analyses in the frame of the case studies?

The analysis of rent arrangements used in some of the localities in the selected micro-regions demonstrated that the property owners proved able to adapt the rent conditions to the specific capacities of these groups. This could for example mean that entry barriers such as deposits are reduced or even levelled (depending on the demand for such housing in a particular locality), while monthly rent could be higher than in housing outside of the locality. As property in problematic technical condition can in the case of disadvantaged regions be purchased relatively cheaply, such a business model can very fast return the initial investment.

The regional research revealed at the same time that not all entrepreneurs that are trying to operate in this segment are successful. While documenting cases of extremely rude behaviour of landlords, who did not respect the privacy of their tenants and felt not restricted by legal limitations when pursuing their interests (e.g. when physically removing non-paying tenants from their property) (Hurrle et al 2015b), we also encountered cases where the landowners seemed unable to handle problems with the clients (Hurrle et al 2013b). This concerns first of all the non-payment of rent, but also behaviour towards other tenants and the treatment of the property.

While it is clear that the management of houses with a high concentration of people from a socially excluded milieu is difficult, it is important to say that the research also revealed cases of landlords, where the business seemed to function economically and where the landlords were the same time assessed positively by their tenants. In most of these cases (Bruntál, Javornicko, Toužimsko), these models were based on the involvement of NGOs, which provided social and community work and were also involved in the management of the privately-owned property.

Conclusions

The structure of Trlifajová Hurrle 2019a was based on three possible explanations for the increasing number of socially excluded localities in rural municipalities. In the conclusion, we note that “the analysis in the chapter demonstrated that the phenomenon of rural localities is not as new as indicated by the data from GAC 2015:

Occurring mostly in areas and municipalities where Roma have been part of the rural population already during socialism, the processes of concentration intensified after the beginning of the new century.” (218)

Confirming the assumptions of our third working hypothesis, the survey data indicate hence that the problems emerged earlier but were not as visible at that time or were overlooked by researchers who focused mostly on the much larger localities in cities. Our findings confirm also one the conclusions of Hurrle et al 2016 discussed in the previous sub-chapter: The existence of localities has a strong ethnic dimension, as a high share of the inhabitants of places that are described as ‘problematic’ or socially excluded are Roma.

While the phenomenon is not as new as initially expected, this does not change the fact that this is a problematic tendency. Most representatives of municipalities, which participated in our survey, perceived the emergence of socially excluded localities and the migration of poor Roma households as a highly problematic trend, which worsens over time. Many localities are characterised by a very bad or even disastrous condition of housing and a high degree of fluctuation – even though in most localities the majority of inhabitants lives in these conditions permanently. The data further shows that the even smaller groups of migrating inhabitants could lead to the worsening of a locality’s perception or result in its destabilization. In a much smaller group of localities live hardly any stable inhabitants. In these places the relations with the rest of the municipality tend to be worst.

Regarding migration, our text notes that while there are cases of urban-rural migration from larger cities, respondents from rural municipalities and social departments on the level of ORP agreed that most of the migration and spatial concentration processes occur within the same micro-region (219). The findings hence support our second working hypothesis. The data indicate that we do not witness a large-scale transfer of poor people from cities to the countryside as assumed in the first working thesis, but the emergence of a parallel housing market and the emergence of a growing group of poor households that lacks access to stable quality housing. While this condition concerns most inhabitants of socially excluded localities, the situation is most extreme in the case of the ‘cyclic migrants’ who migrate from locality to locality.

The driving factor for migration is often the housing emergency situation, from which the vulnerable households see no other exit option. Key push factors are the indebtedness of households and the non-accessibility of stable housing in their home municipality. The historic presence of Roma in the municipalities, where localities emerged, indicates that the migratory and settlement patterns are determined by a combination of market-related factors (empty housing capacities in certain municipalities, strategies of private property owners) and cultural and social factors (family ties). The importance of the second group of factors might also explain why the growing problems with housing in cities do not drive more Roma from cities into rural locations. Interview partners from cities consulted during our research stressed that the cultural divide between urban and rural lifestyle is a big obstacle, which would hinder many Roma from larger cities to consider the option of moving to peripheral rural locations. This barrier is smaller in the case of the relation between rural towns and the villages in their surroundings, where migratory moves are - in both directions - very common.

3.3 What is the position of marginalized people on the labour market?

3.3.1 Findings from desk research and case studies

While we demonstrated in Trlifajová Hurrle 2019a that poor Roma households' lack of financial resources is only partly responsible for the tendencies towards segregation on the housing market, unemployment and employment at very low wages and / or at precarious conditions are nevertheless crucial determinants of the vulnerable position of Roma in Czech society.

In the 2013 report on the implementation of the Czech Republic's National Roma integration Strategy, the authors point to the lack of ethnic data in official unemployment statistics and refer therefore to the data of the 2011 UNDP/WB/EC Regional Survey:

"[The survey] can provide us with insights on the structure of Roma employment and unemployment. The picture emerging from the data [...] does not confirm popular beliefs that "the Roma are not working", but the data clearly show that unemployment is a much bigger concern for Roma than for non-Roma. While 39% of the Roma in the labour force stated that they were unemployed, the corresponding value among non-Roma living in physical proximity to them was only 6%." (Hurrle et al 2013a: 53)

Table 6: Employment of Roma and their non-Roma neighbours in 2011

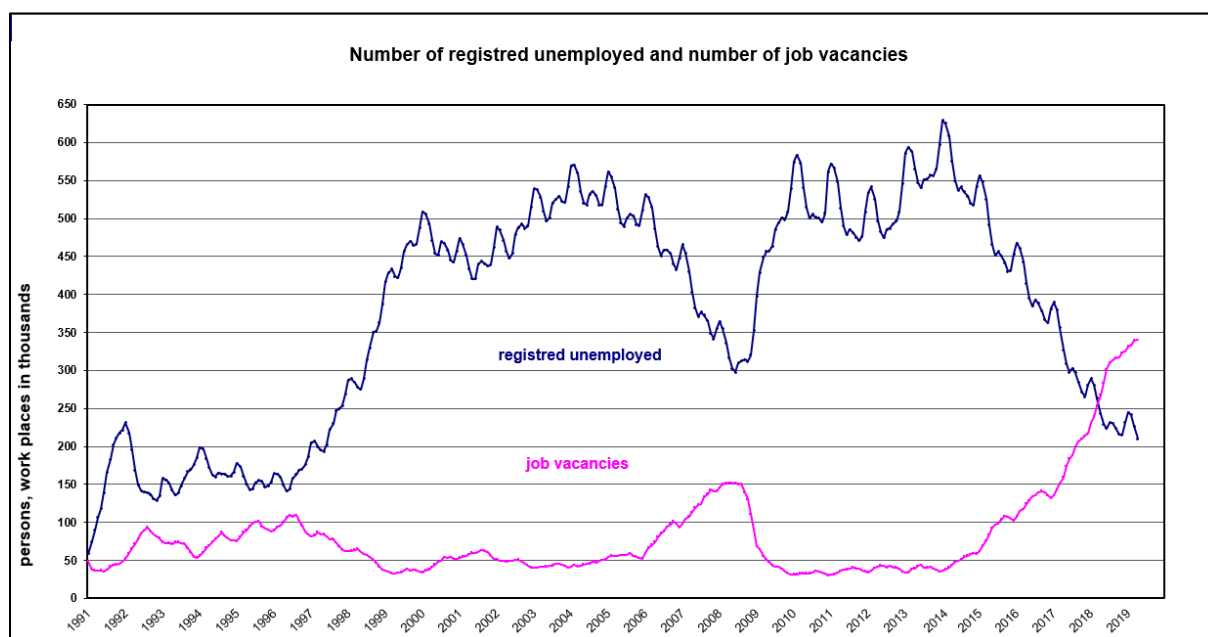
	Male		Female		Total	
	Roma	Non-Roma	Roma	Non-Roma	Roma	Non-Roma
Employment rate (15-64)	43%	76%	19%	64%	31%	70%
Employment rate (15-24)	19%	32%	9%	22%	14%	27%
Unemployment rate (15-64)	33%	5%	48%	6%	39%	6%
Unemployment rate (15-24)	59%	20%	64%	24%	61%	21%
Activity rate (15-64)	63%	80%	37%	68%	50%	74%
Last employment experience (15-64)	3.7	2.5	6.6	3.7	5.0	3.1
No employment experience rate (15-64)	32%	21%	41%	20%	37%	21%
No employment experience rate (15-24)	67%	60%	91%	50%	77%	56%
Self-employment rate (15-64)	4%	11%	1%	5%	2%	8%
Self-employment rate (15-24)	1%	0%	1%	0%	1%	0%
Informal employment incidence (15-64)	32%	10%	18%	7%	27%	9%
Informal employment incidence (15-24)	47%	5%	14%	27%	36%	13%

Source: UNDP/WB/EC Regional Roma Survey 2011, taken from Hurre et al 2013a: 53.

The high unemployment rate among Roma cannot be explained through a single factor, such as ethnic discrimination against Roma on the labour market or insufficient skills. While these two factors are extremely important and mutually reinforcing, another very important aspect is the already debated territorial distribution of Roma. This problem is even more salient in the case of peripheral rural municipalities, where the unemployment rate was at the time of the research also relatively high even among the majority population.

At the time of the research conducted for this part of the dissertation project (2014/15), the Czech economy was only beginning to recover from the shock of the global economic crisis. As can be seen in the overview of unemployment in the period since 1991 (figure 12), the period since the beginning of the crisis had been characterized by a rise of unemployment numbers, which unemployment numbers going back to pre-2008 levels only in 2017. Other features of this period were a stagnation of wages and attempts by the state to curb expenditures for welfare and social services.

Figure 12: Unemployment and job vacancies in the Czech Republic 1991 - 2019



Source: Czech Statistical Office

The negative consequences of these trends were felt most dramatically in the case of disadvantaged regions, where unemployment has been disproportionately high even before the crisis. As an illustration, the impact of the crisis on the unemployment rate in selected municipalities of the micro-regions analysed in the frame of our dissertation project is displayed in table 8. Unfortunately, data on the level of the municipalities for the years 2012 and 2013 are lacking due to the change of statistical information system of the Ministry for Labour and Social Affairs.

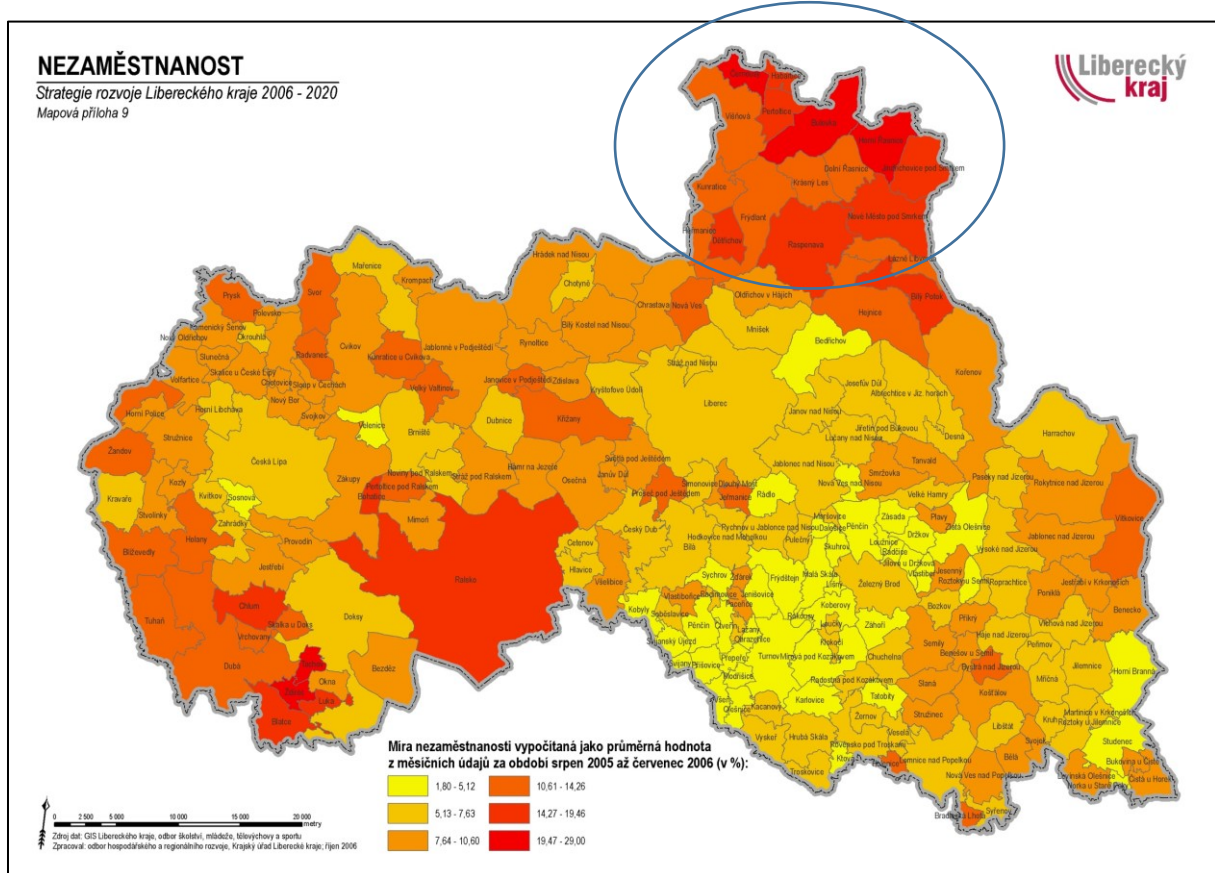
Table 7: Unemployment in municipalities of selected micro-regions 2008 – 2015

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
<i>Czech Republic</i>	4,4 %	6,7 %	7,3 %	6,7 %	7,0 %	7,0 %	6,1 %	5,0 %
<i>Mělnicko</i>								
<i>Mělník</i>	5,3 %	8,0 %	8,9 %	8,7 %			7,6 %	6,4 %
<i>Spomyšl</i>	12,9 %	18,8 %	25,7 %	28,2 %			17,2 %	18,2 %
<i>Šluknovsko</i>								
<i>Rumburk</i>	10,1 %	12,9 %	13,0 %	11,9 %			8,3 %	6,8 %
<i>Staré Křečany</i>	19,7 %	24,4 %	25,0 %	22,2 %			11,8 %	9,8 %
<i>Žluticko</i>								
<i>Žlutice</i>	7,4 %	11,7 %	13,5 %	11,8 %			10,3 %	5,5 %
<i>Valeč</i>	17,5 %	23,5 %	25,1 %	17,5 %			15,5 %	13,9 %
<i>Frýdlantsko</i>								
<i>Nové Město p. Smrkem</i>	13,4 %	19,5 %	17,3 %	16,2 %			11,2 %	9,8 %
<i>Bulovka</i>	15,7 %	20,3 %	24,3 %	25,7 %			14,2 %	12,3 %
<i>Bruntálsko</i>								
<i>Bruntál</i>	11,7 %	15,7 %	16,9 %	16,4 %			15,0 %	13,2 %
<i>Vrbno pod P.</i>	12,1 %	16,8 %	17,9 %	16,2 %			13,1 %	10,2 %
<i>Osoblaha</i>	14,8 %	17,9 %	17,9 %	21,0 %			18,1 %	17,0 %

Date in each year for December 31. Source: Data for municipalities: Website MPSV, Statistika nezaměstnanosti z územního hlediska. Data for Czech Republic: Czech Statistical Office, Zaměstnanost, nezaměstnanost.

The unemployment data for a number of municipalities with rural localities from the selected micro-regions illustrate first of all the impact of the economic crisis. While the data seems to indicate that the impact of the crisis differed greatly from municipality to municipality, it is necessary to bear in mind that many of the municipalities included in the table are relatively small. Data on unemployment are hence influenced not only by the development of the regional and national economy, but also by the municipality's involvement in public-work schemes (subsidied work places at minimum wage financed by the Labour Office, which are in most cases offered by the municipality) and also by practices of the responsible local labour office (cancelling of unemployment status of people due to violations of formal obligations). In addition to this, the local unemployment rate can be influenced by the growth of a segregated locality and the moving-in of socially excluded persons from other municipalities. The influence of a locality's presence on the data illustrates the example of Spomyšl, where unemployment rate is unusual high in comparison to other rural municipalities in the surroundings.

Figure 13: Unemployment in Liberec Region 2006



Source: URL (15.5.2019): https://www.kraj-lbc.cz/public/orlk/09_nezamestnanost_281556fb3c.jpg

The example of municipalities listed in the table shows at the same time that there tends to be a significant difference in the unemployment rate between rural sub-centres (such as Žlutice, Rumburk, Nové Město pod Smrkem, Bruntál and Vrbno p.P.) and other municipalities that are smaller and more peripheral. While the unemployment rate in the rural sub-centres tends to be higher than in the regional centres, it tends to be lower than in the more remote villages where commuting possibilities are much more limited. The correlation between remoteness and unemployment rate can be observed very well in the case of the Frydlantsko micro-region, where unemployment is highest in the case of rural municipalities along the Czech-Polish border that are geographically remote and badly accessible by public transportation (figure 18).

As the working opportunities in such remote municipalities are very limited, the interviews with members of the Roma community in the selected micro-regions focused on their strategies to access other sources of income than social welfare. In the following, I will briefly summarize the most important findings from the case studies:

Finding 1: Importance of public work programmes

In many places employment in public work programmes through the municipality was the only option for legal employment without a need to commute. Usually paying not more than minimum wage, the jobs offered through these schemes are for a limited period of time (usually one year) and involved the cleaning and maintenance of public spaces. In a similar scheme financed by the Ministry of the Interior, some municipalities employ crime prevention assistants that usually support the work of the municipal police. While this tool is more often used in urban settings, in case of the studied rural municipalities it was used in the town of Žlutice. As Žlutice has no municipal police, the work of this crime prevention officer from the local Roma community was directly co-ordinated by the town hall. Another speciality of Žlutice was the employment of unemployed persons in the municipal forests, where they would collect and hackl knots of woods, which the city used in the wood-fired municipal central heating station. The town promoted this activity as a way to provide employment while at the same time reducing heating costs for its citizen (Hurrle et al 2013b: 61).

Another municipality that made extensive usage of public works is Krasná Lípa in the Šluknovsko region. As many other municipalities in the region had shown limited interest to make use of this scheme, the municipality persuaded the Labour Office to provide resources for the employment of a relatively large group of people. As the employment through the public work scheme is always temporarily limited, the interviewed vice-mayor explained Jan Kolář explained that the municipality tries to offer the work places in a way so that there is always some person from the larger families with employment.

Finding 2: Income from wage work vs. income from social assistance

While the offer of public work programmes was assessed mostly positively by the interviewed members of the Roma community, the financial improvement from employment at minimum wage is in many cases almost neglectable. While such work improves the income situation in the case of households without children significantly, the situation is different in case of families with children, where the officially defined living minimum (equivalent to the sum paid as social assistance in case of long-term unemployment) of the household is higher. Accordingly, the financial reward from accepting work for a family with children is not higher than 2000 – 3000

Czech crowns. While such a sum is already felt in the family budget, it is necessary to be aware of the fact that in many cases employment brings also additional costs (transportation, clothing, child care, food outside of family, etc.).

It is not uncommon that the income from wage work is not sufficient high to push working households out of extreme poverty. As we described in the situation analysis for the Frýdlantsko micro-region, in this case the household remains eligible to social assistance:

The receiving of social assistance is in the public discourse often linked to unemployment. However, in our research we often identified a different situation, where social assistance co-existed with low income from labour. According to Mrs Koutníková, the head of the social department in Nové Město pod Smrkem, is about half of all Roma households in the town in the situation of material need. This applies also to households, where some members work: "In the families with children, it is almost hundred percent. Including those, where one family member works."

The combination of social welfare and low income from legal employment has nothing to do with the often-popularized misuse of welfare. The situation bears witness of the poverty of these households, where even income from work are not sufficient to cover the most elementary needs. It also testifies of the very low wages that are paid to people with low qualification." (Hurrle et al 2015: 46)

The study further explains that this situation is partly the result of several reforms of the system for social assistance in the Czech Republic, which led to the reduction of several types of social benefits, and the policy of the Czech governments of that period, which had decided to not increase the minimum wage for several years. In the consequence, the minimum wage was at the time of the research one of the lowest in the entire European Union:

"In the consequence, persons who are employed, do not have sufficiently high wages needed for their subsistence (life minimum). Even when working, these persons have to live under the strict disciplining regime for recipients of social assistance. It is a highly problematic situation – for some of the households with children it is a condition, from which they have almost no chance to escape. "Life from welfare" is connected to various restrictions. In addition to a permanent live in a control regime (monthly visits of the Labour Office, controls of property and spendings), this families are not able to legally build up any savings because recipients of social assistance are obliged to use all their property to cover their existential needs. One consequence of this condition [...] is a high risk of indebtedness – debts can begin to grow with any kind of unexpected spendings and due to the low income it is very hard to overcome the debts." (Ibid.)

Some interviewed beneficiaries of the public work programme explained their motivation in taking part in the programme with the need of a daily routine and the psychological problems resulting from unemployment. This seemed especially the case in case of elderly Roma, who had been used to work regularly during socialism. If compared with employment in the private sector, where people with very low qualifications were at the time of the research often paid not much

more than minimum wage, public works had also indisputable advantages. First of all, the work is offered in the home municipality. It is therefore not necessary to cover costs for commuting. Secondly, whereas commercially offered work is often shift-work, public work usually is realized during the day and many municipalities will be ready to respect particular needs of the employee, such as the need to stay at home due to illness of children.

While the financial motivation for the acceptance of public work is generally low, municipalities who provide other types of services or goods relevant to the target group of public work schemes, could use this fact as a tool to work with the motivation of their workers. In the case of Žlutice, the municipality tried to motivate unemployed persons threatened by social exclusion by linking the employment with the re-payment of debts for municipal flats. While this might have helped to prevent the loss of housing, the measurement was perceived controversially as it left the working households with a household budget that was actually lower than in case of unemployed households receiving social benefits (Hurrle et al 2013b: 61).

Finding 3: Commuting to work and employment through agencies

At the time of the research, employment opportunities for people with low qualification beyond public employment schemes were in the analysed micro-regions very limited. In the case of Žluticko and Frýdlantsko, opportunities for employment existed mostly outside of the rural micro-regions. While the distance to Karlovy Vary and Liberec is not very large, respondents pointed to the cost of travel that would in many cases be higher than the difference between income from employment and income from social assistance. While the situation on the employment market in Karlovy Vary was at the time of the research in the Žluticko micro-region (2011) described as problematic, options were considerably better in Liberec (2015). Due to the stronger demand for workers, companies from the industrial zones in Liberec and surroundings had begun to offer free bus transportation to many municipalities of the Frýdlantsko micro-region. Unlike public transportation, this company-organized transportation was fully in line with the schedule of the shift-work, allowing also inhabitants of more remote municipalities to participate in commuting. Respondents nevertheless pointed to several problematic aspects.

The first problematic aspect mentioned by respondents from the Frýdlantsko micro-region was discrimination by age. Respondents older than 50 claimed to be told informally when asking for work that the company would only employ younger persons:

„Concerning work, it wasn't easy at all. In some companies it was enough to say “Nové Město pod Smrkem” - “Good-by!”. They do not employ people from Frýdlantsko. In the end I found work in the industrial zone of Liberec. I asked if they would not have work also for my father. You know, my father is a person, who worked all his life. The head of my section said that he would trust me and that he is very sorry, but that the company would in principle employ no one who's older than fifty. If you are older, than you can just shot yourself, that's how it is today.”

(Roma family, Nový Město nad Smrkem, quoted from Hurrle et al 2015: 48)

This preference surprises if put into contrast to the experiences of interviewed co-ordinators of municipal public work programmes, which had often stressed that elderly Roma with work experience from the socialist period are much more reliable than younger Roma, who would

usually lack work experience while often holding at the same time unrealistic wage expectations.

A second problematic aspect is the incompatibility of shift-work and commuting with responsibilities for children. This limits first of all women:

„I would like to work, but for women this is impossible. Here, I won't find anything, and commuting to Liberec is not realistic because of the children. We consider to move closer to Liberec because of this – we even began to consider a concrete house in Mníšek u Liberce.”

(Roma woman from Bulovka Arnoltice, quoted from Hurrle et al 2015: 48)

While the strong ambition and also financial possibilities of this Roma family, which indeed decided soon after the interview to leave the Frýdlantsko micro-region, is an unusual case, the lack of employment opportunities for women in the rural communities is a widespread problem, which concerns also women from the majority population. The problem is intensified by the opening hours of rural kindergartens and the afternoon programmes in rural schools, which often close earlier as it is the case in urban municipalities. However, not in all families women are able or willing to stay at home with the children. In the case of Žlutice, shift-work and commuting by the parents translated in the eyes of interviewed teachers in some cases to the neglect of children, who were left too much on their own (Hurrle et al 2013b: 89 – 94).

A third problem mentioned by respondents from Frýdlantsko is the employment through labour agencies, who were described by respondents as robbing their employees from a substantial share of their wage:

“[While it is hard to estimate the extend of informal labour], we should mention that also legal work has often a precarious character. This could contribute to the disappearance of the border between legal and illegal activity. In relationship to precarious work, respondents mentioned most often labour agencies, which have in the region a very bad reputation. When talking about labour agencies, the respondents used phrases like “pure robbery”, “fraud” or “exploitation”. Some respondents stated that new employees in many firms are not given another chance than to work through labour agencies. [...] The head of the Frýdlant branch of the Labour Office confirmed that there has been in recent times at least one example where a labour agency went bankrupt and workers ended without wages and work.”

(Hurrle et al 2015: 49)

While commuting to places outside of the micro-region was a very common phenomenon in Žluticko and Frýdlantsko, in the Šluknovsko and Bruntálsko the situation is somewhat different. While there exists the possibility of commuting to Česká Lípa and Děčín (from Šluknovsko) or Olomouc and Krnov (from Bruntálsko), these destinations are too far and travel costs are too expensive for workers with low qualification. While the employment situation in these regions was problematic, some interviewed Roma found employment in factories located in Rumburk, Varnsdorf and the surrounding of both cities, respectively the city of Bruntál.

A specific trait of Šluknovsko is the long border with Germany. Several of the interviewed Roma from Rumburk and Staré Křečany made their living from the informal collection of used

commodities in German municipalities along the border and their resale to Czech costumers (Hajska et al 2013: 82-83). While the proximity of the German border offered also employment opportunities in construction and kitchen work, lacking language skills limited in the eyes of the interviewed respondents from the Roma community possibilities to make use of these options.

3.3.2 Trlifajová Hurrle 2019b- Introduction to the article and its research objectives

The overview of labour market-related findings from the case studies led to a picture of the situation, which is distinctively different to the popular claims about welfare abuse, which have heavily influenced the political discourse in the Czech over the last two decades (Rabušic and Sirovátka 1999, Rat 2009, Hurrle et al 2013). Calls for a tougher approach towards 'welfare misusers' and 'free-riders' are, in the Czech Republic, an evergreen issue in every election campaign across the entire political spectrum. Even when used without any direct racial connotation, they are often understood as a hidden reference to the Roma minority.

Reacting both to public demands to curb welfare misuse and recommendations by international organisations such as the OECD to increase the efficiency of welfare systems and labour market regulations, the Czech governments gradually overhauled the welfare system with the aim to strengthen incentives for unemployed people to accept employment (Sirovátka 2014, Průša et al 2013, Horáková et al, 2013). These changes were in line with developments in many Western countries, where the development of welfare policies has brought a greater emphasis on the question of whether welfare support functions as a disincentive for employment. Sometimes promoted under the slogan that "work must pay", the new emphasis on labour market participation and individual motivation for employment led to the introduction of activation schemes, in which individual benefit-recipients are often requested to demonstrate their availability for work (Clasen and Clegg, 2007; Bonoli and Natali, 2012; Bonoli, 2010; Van Kersbergen and Hemerijck, 2012; Taylor-Gooby et al, 2015).

While it is certainly legitimate to create incentives for employment and sanctions for those who refuse to accept employment, our above-quoted description of the situation of the working poor in the town of Nové Město pod Smrkem demonstrated that the philosophy of this approach can be in clash with the real situation of poor people. While the state sought to toughen the regime for welfare recipients in order to create incentives to accept employment, the case of Nové Město pod Smrkem pointed to the situation of working families who face the regulations of this strict regime because their salary is too low to fully cover their living costs. The low wage level in disadvantaged regions of the Czech Republic is however not the only factor, which limits in practice the functionality of "work must pay" policies. Another crucial problem is the system for the wage seizure of indebted employees, which reduces the difference between income from wage labour and income from social assistance to a minimum, creating thereby strong incentives for informal employment. While informal employment can hence be a preference, another important issue is the limited offer of regular employment. As has been demonstrated with the example of the controversial labour agencies operating in the Frýdlantsko micro-region, people with low-qualifications from peripheral areas are often not given the possibility to opt for regular employment.

The contrast between the assumptions of law-makers, who sought to design welfare policies and employment regulations in ways that should motivate people to accept work, and the reality of vulnerable people in disadvantaged regions, was the motivation for the article "Work must pay: Does it? Precarious employment and employment motivation for low-income households", on which I worked together with my colleague Lucie Trlifajová. Our decision to analyse the often-

problematic effects of welfare state regulations on the position of vulnerable households on the labour market was initially motivated by observations made in the Žluticko micro-region, where the head of the local bureau of the Labour Office helped us to reconstruct in detail the income situation of (anonymized) welfare recipients (Hurrle et al 2013b: 63 – 66). This was followed by two studies realized for the Agency for Social Inclusion that dealt explicitly with the relationship between the labour market and the welfare system. While the first of these studies modelled the effect of various changes in the situation of a vulnerable household (e.g. employment status, changing structure of household) on the family income (Trlifajová et al 2014), the second study sought to confront the results of these mathematical calculations with the reality of people with low qualifications living in disadvantaged regions of the Czech Republic (Trlifajová et al 2015a). Drawing mainly from the research conducted for these studies, the article included in the appendix to this study confronted the descriptions of situations gained in the interviews and the mathematical calculations with the philosophy of the “work must pay” approach. In the introduction to the article, we explain that “the article critically examines policy implications and possible shortcomings of the notion that ‘work must pay’ in the specific environment of post-communist Central and Eastern Europe:

“We have approached this analysis from a holistic perspective, taking into account not only the policy measures themselves but also other, related issues or fields, such as regional labour markets, knowledge of the tax and benefit system and its administration, individual non-financial motivations and the overall socio-economic situation of the households.” (Trlifajová Hurrle 2019b: 376)

The article first briefly describes the theoretical context and presumptions of the ‘making work pay’ approaches. This section is followed by a discussion of the development of the ‘making work pay’ approaches in the broader context of Czech social policy and a summary of findings from previous studies that sought to measure financial incentives for employment through household microsimulation models. This theoretical section is followed by the main part, where we compared the findings of the household microsimulations with the everyday experience of welfare recipients in two disadvantaged regions of the Czech Republic:

“In order to be able to do so, we sought to cover households with the same composition as those of the microsimulations. The findings are structured into four parts. In each of them, we describe one factor which influences the position of vulnerable households on the labour market yet is not acknowledged in the microsimulations used to design policies.” (Ibid.)

3.3.3 Research methodology

In the first phase of the research Lucie Trlifajová created with the support of one mathematic a complex model for the calculation of entitlements for various types of welfare benefits. This table allows to calculate how the family income is affected by changes of various factors, such as:

- employment status of (a) household member(s)

- housing status (with determinants such as: type of rent contract, place of permanent residency, rent)
- household structure (number of persons living together and forming an economic community)
- wage seizure of household members.

Checked on accuracy by welfare experts of the Ministry for Social Affairs (on request of the Agency for Social Inclusion), the highly complex table allowed to model typical situations of vulnerable households, such as the acceptance of employment by a family member or the moving-out of a child from the common household. In order to properly calculate the effects of such changes, it is necessary to analyse not only the change from month to month, but also effects on the income in later months. The reason for this complication is various calculation periods for different types of welfare benefits, which can after any change lead to high deviations of income over several months.

The core of the research consisted of the realization of in-depth interviews with 26 low-income households (30 persons in total), who had been identified as being “on the border between welfare and employment”. About half of the interview partners were Roma, while the other half lived in similar social conditions as members of the majority population. Our objective was not to have a representative sample, but to conduct the research in a context that is typical for the largest group of those who are unemployed. Reflecting the rise of inter-regional differences since 1990 (Meier and Franke, 2015) and the strong regional dimension of unemployment (Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, 2016), the interviews were realized in two disadvantaged regions of the Czech Republic. While one location was predominantly rural, the other one was of urban character. As many of the information concerning issues such as informal employment is highly sensitive, interview partners and the co-operating organizations was promised to not identify the exact regions.

The interview partners were identified with the help of informal networks. In order to reach potential interview partners, we cooperated in each locality with two or three local non-governmental social service providers:

“While some of the partners were clients, others were acquaintances of the co-operating organizations’ staff members. The involvement of social service providers also allowed for the identification of households which, in the opinion of the service provider, represented typical problems of households on the border between welfare and employment in the region. Cooperation with multiple service providers helped us to check for individual bias. [...]The interviews attempted to capture the interview partners’ work trajectories to see how welfare support and employment interlocked. They further focused on the economic situations of the households and experience with the welfare system (including knowledge of the system and access to information), as well as other sources of income.” (Trlifajová Hurrle: 382)

As it was our intension to contrast our financial calculations with the reality, it was further necessary to select interview partners with the same composition as previously used in the modelling: two adult households with children (represented by 12 households), one adult households with children (7 households), and households without children (7 households). For the same reason, it was necessary to exclude households with additional income, such as pensions, long-term care benefits, disability benefits or insurance-based unemployment benefits (Ibid.).

In order to better understand the wider context and to verify information provided by the first group of respondents, in addition to this a total of 17 interviews were realized with local labour market experts (labour office employees responsible for the administration of benefits and employment services on the local level (6), employees of a non-governmental organization responsible for the implementation of employment projects (5), and local employers offering low-waged employment (6)).

The analysis of the interviews allowed us to identify a number of key issues “which the respondents mentioned most often as crucial factors when explaining their position on the labour market.” These issues were used to structure the analysis into four sections. The brief presentation of key findings in the following sub-chapter follows this structure, which was also used in the original article.

3.3.4 Key findings and implications of the article

Finding 1: Limits of accessible employment

The microsimulation of the household income used in our calculation compared the household income of an economically inactive household, who depended on income from social assistance, with income of an economically active household. As in case of previous models created for the same purpose (Pavel 2005, Jahoda 2006, World Bank 2008, Žižlavský 2010, Trlifajová et al 2014), the second condition was defined as legal full-time employment on the basis of a labour contract.

However, the interviews with respondents from disadvantaged regions who had been chosen because of their experiences with the live in the border zone between employment and social assistance revealed that our economic model wasn't depicting the reality correctly. While many respondents had been working long-term on full-time positions during the 1990s, the period afterwards has been characterized by a trend towards precarity. This precarity has many aspects: Respondents' working biographies are interrupted by prolonged periods of unemployment and there is an increase of part-time and temporary employment. Directly related to this is the increasing number of time periods spent working within the framework of public work schemes (Trlifajová Hurrle 2019b: 383).

While the decline of demand for unskilled labour and the worsening of employment conditions can be triggered by economic crises, our article puts the developments in this particular segment of the Czech labour market in relation to the international long-term trend:

“While there are significant differences between countries, people in marginalized positions of the labour market are often pushed into precarious or atypical forms of employment (Emmenegger et al., 2012; Rueda, 2005, Palier and Thelen 2010), with in-work and recurrent poverty becoming as important an issue as unemployment (Crettaz, 2013; Shildrick et al., 2012).”

(Trlifajová Hurrle 2019b: 377)

As most respondents stated that they had very limited chances to find a permanent job, their employment reality was characterized by prolonged periods of unemployment and employment

through public work. In addition to this, the respondents stated most often to be employed through so called employment agreements (*dohoda o pracovní činnost*). Some respondents stated that this form of employment was combined with informal extra payment. These precarious forms of employment have negative consequences for the disposable income of the household, which tends to be lower as has been assumed in the micro-simulation:

“Under certain circumstances (if the wage is 10,000 CZK or lower) these agreements do not have to include health and social insurance. Consequently, when employed, many respondents were covering the health insurance, obligatory in the Czech Republic, themselves. None of them paid pension insurance, as these payments are not obligatory, and the costs were perceived as too high.”
(Ibid.: 384)

Comparing income from social assistance with income from a type of employment, which in reality is not offered to people threatened by social exclusion, the making work pay models neglect the limited demand for low-qualified labour and the proliferation of precarious work arrangements, where workers face additional costs (for health insurance, but e.g. also for fees of labour agencies mentioned above) and low social protection. While such models have been used in public policy reforms with the objective to create sufficiently strong financial incentives to employment, the reward is in many cases much lower than has been assumed by policy-makers.

Findings 2: Limited knowledge of the system and benefit non-take up

We learnt already from the construction of Lucie Trlifajová’s mathematical model for the calculation of household income that the rules of the welfare state are very complex. Not surprisingly, our article notes that most of the interview partners did not understand the system and that their perception was usually based on anecdotal knowledge of the experiences of other welfare recipients (Ibid.: 384). It is however difficult to correctly predict the financial consequences of changes of employment status on the basis of examples of other households, as there is a large number of variables influencing the outcome. In addition to this, the informal knowledge of citizen can be outdated without reflecting the effect of recent changes of regulations. As demonstrates this quote, the complexity of the system seems to overwhelm not only potential beneficiaries of social support, but also the administrators of the system working for the Labour Offices:

I don’t really know what we’re entitled to get ... The people at the unemployment office don’t know anyway. Our housing benefit was reduced. When I didn’t work, it was lower than when I did work. So I went there to ask, and they said they didn’t know, that it was what the computer calculated ... I have no idea how it’s calculated.

(Woman, couple, 2 children – quoted after Ibid.: 384)

The difficulty to correctly predict the financial impact of one’s choices concerning employment are deepened by the gradual change of various types of entitlements, as different time-frames are used to calculate the entitlement for different types of benefits. Social assistance is evaluated on a monthly basis; housing subsidies are evaluated quarter; and the child benefit, once a year. Welfare recipients can be positively surprised to receive a relatively large amount of money in the

first month after accepting employment and learn only later that the payments are reduced gradually. At the opposite, social benefits began to build up gradually after the loss of employment as well. Using the example of a single-parent household with two children in the case of temporary employment over a 3-month period, figure 14 illustrates this effect over a six-months period.

In order to avoid to become indebted, the household should hence use the income highly economically to balance the irregular money flow. However, as the households live often in poverty, this is difficult when not even being able to foresee how the welfare payments will react to the change of situation.

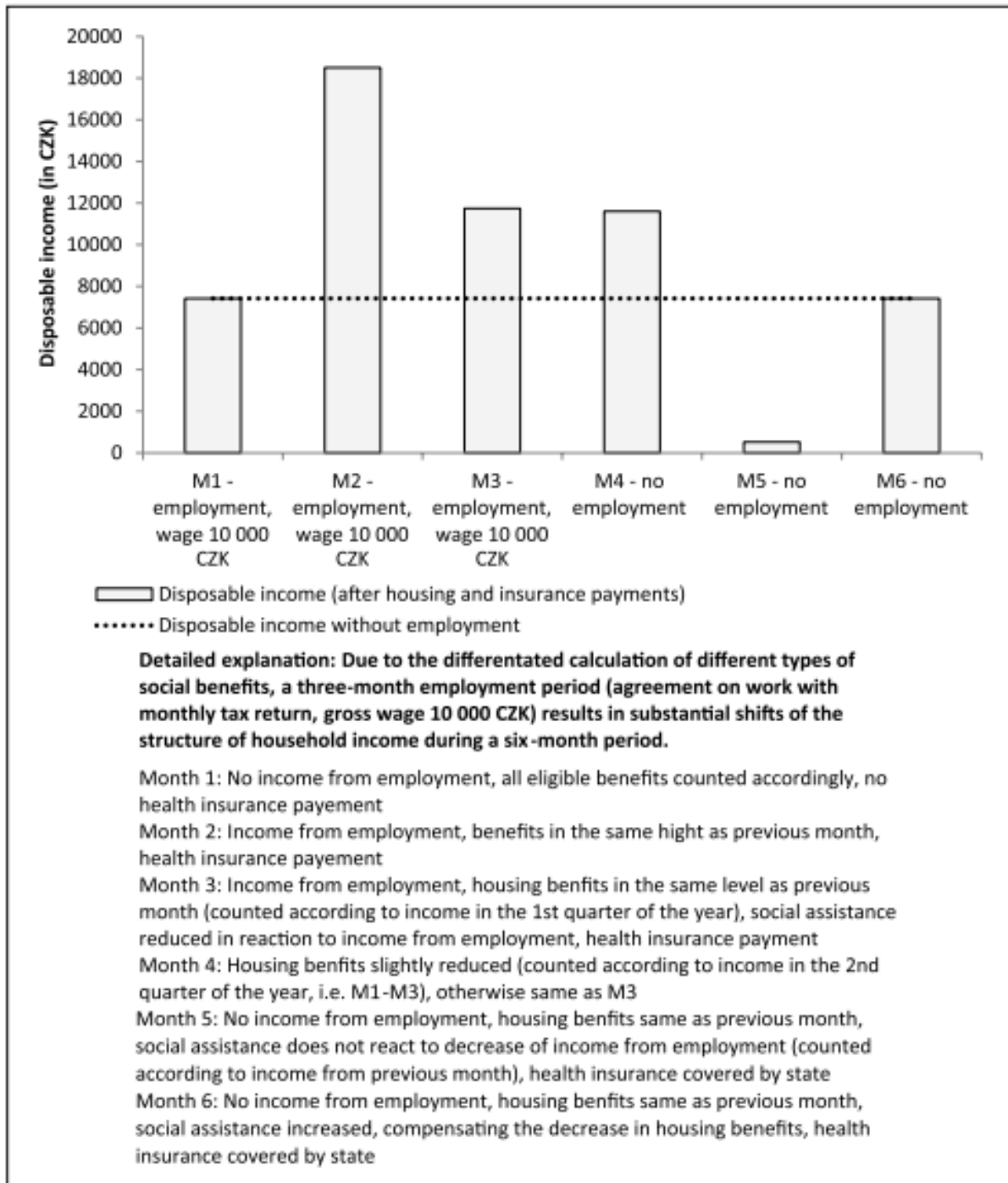
Another highly important finding is the limited knowledge of the respondents about the possibility to combine employment with the receiving of social assistance. In the previous sub-chapter, I had explained this possibility along the example of Nové Město pod Smrkem in the Frýdlantsko micro-region, where the interviewed head of the social department had described the combination of employment and social assistance as a very common practice. However, our labour-market research in two different regions indicates that the widespread use of this possibility is rather an exception. Our article states that it was most striking that many of the respondents did not know about the possibility of combining full-time employment and benefits. Worse than that, in some cases, they seem to been told wrongly by Labour Office officials that they were not entitled:

When I first went to apply for the housing benefit, they told me I wasn't eligible: 'You earn 12 thousand crowns, you're living in luxury', and 'With such a wage you don't stand a chance'. Well, and then they told me to move into a smaller flat ... Most people would give up. They get fobbed off, but I'm employed in social services, I knew I was entitled ... In the end they said, 'Well, try it then.'

(Woman, no children – quoted from Trlifajová Hurrle: 386)

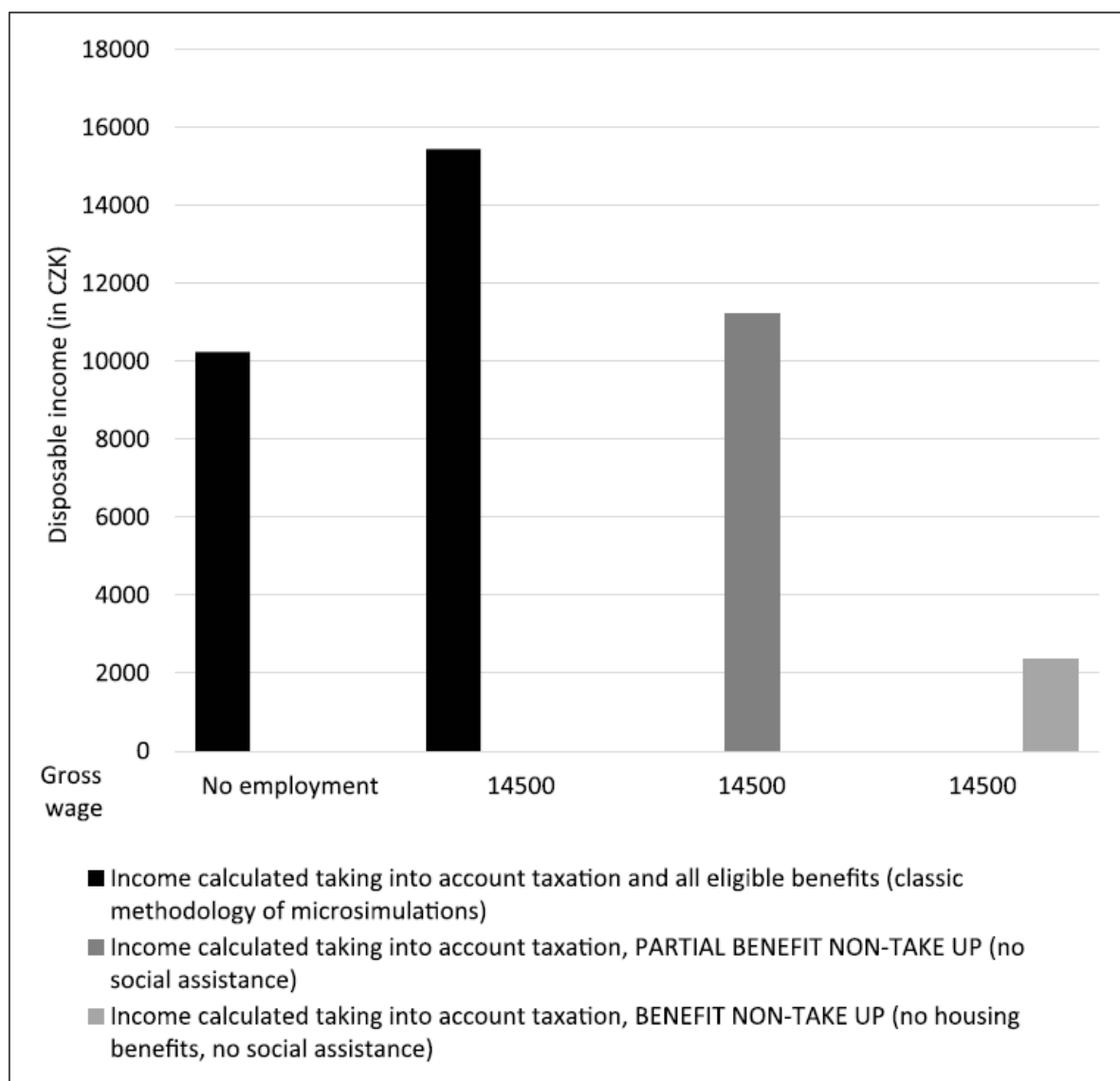
Lacking information about the availability of state support is likely to result in a very high non-take up of social benefits. As demonstrates figure 15, this can in the worst-case lead to situations where working households end up in a situation where they are no longer able to cover elementary living costs. Lacking awareness about the eligibility of working households could in addition to this be a fuel to social tensions, as working poor can wrongly gain the impression that state help is available only to those who are economically passive.

Figure 14: Impact of temporary employment on household monthly disposable income (1 adult + 2 children)



Source: Graph originally published in Trlifajová Hurrle 2019b: 385.

Figure 15: Impact of benefit non-take-up on household disposable income (2 adults + children, 1 person employed)



Source: Originally published in Trlifajová Hurrle 2019b: 11.

Findings 3: Income increase x financially motivating employment

We already discussed the limited financial reward from employment as one of the findings of the field research. The mathematical calculations and the interviews realized in the course of the research for our article confirmed this finding:

“For many households, entering low-wage employment usually did not bring a significant change in income. It only brought a shift in the importance of different financial sources, shifting the main source of income from welfare support to employment.” (Ibid.: 387)

While the public discourse in the Czech Republic is dominated by the idea that welfare benefits are too generous, in the reality of our respondents neither the income from welfare nor the income from work (or the combination of both) was sufficient to lift the households out of poverty. In fact, the income from welfare and formal employment was in the cases of all of the respondents insufficient to cover living costs. Accordingly, they were combining the income from employment and/or social support with informal employment, support from the wider family and loans (Ibid.: 387). The very low level of minimum wage and officially defined living minimum was also acknowledged by the interviewed experts:

“Wages are low, that’s the problem. It’s not the high benefits. I haven’t met a single person who could live off benefits. In that case they can’t live off minimum wage either.”

(Head of a Job Counsellor unit, quoted after Ibid.: 387)

Finding 4: Over-indebtedness

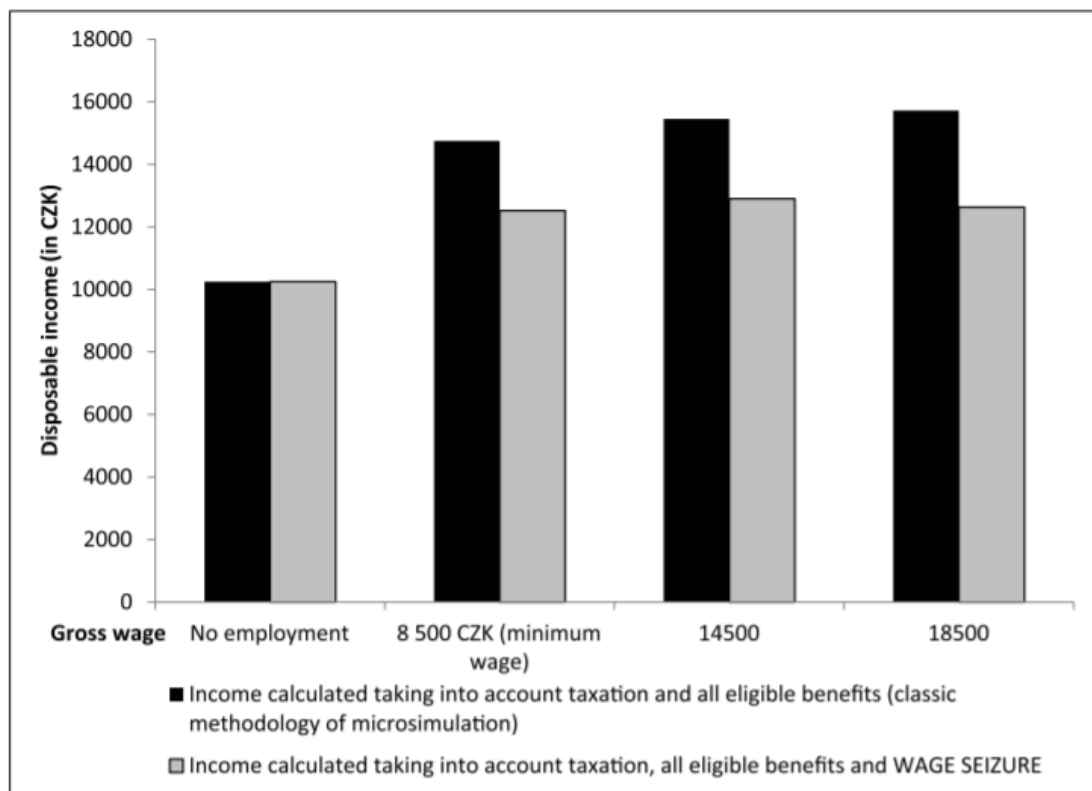
One of the most widespread and serious social problems in the Czech Republic is over-indebtedness. As mentioned in the introduction to this dissertation, over-indebtedness is especially in disadvantaged and highly peripheral regions very widespread. The problem is not limited to inhabitants of socially excluded localities, but concerns a significant share of the local population. The problem’s scale was confirmed also by the Labour Office employees that had been interviewed as part of the interviews with local experts. According to their estimate, over half, in some cases three quarters, of welfare recipients would be facing property seizures (Ibid.: 388).

While the share of over-indebted people in the Czech Republic is one of the highest in Europe (Angel Heitzmann 2015), the conventional mathematical models for the calculation of the financial reward from employment do not reflect at all that wage seizure can alter the calculation fundamentally. The same is true for the welfare system, where the decision about eligibility for social support and its amount is made on the basis of income *before* wage seizure. While it is logical that the state does not want to contribute indirectly to the payment of debts through social benefits, the current state of regulation does in some situations completely contradict the idea that “work must pay”:

For over-indebted households, the financial incentive for employment is shaped by a different logic than that used in the microsimulation models. Once the person is employed, the creditors seize part of their wages. As the entitlement for social assistance and housing benefits are calculated on the basis of income before wage seizure, the wage increases may not result in an increase of disposable income; in certain circumstances it can even result in an income reduction. (Ibid.: 388)

Our article demonstrates such an effect with the calculation of income by a family with two children. In the case that the family relies only on social assistance, the disposable income is slightly above 10 000 CZK. The acceptance of employment at minimum wage leads to a slight improvement of the financial situation. However, the income of the family paradoxically is slightly lower in a situation when the wage is more than double the minimum wage. In the article, another calculation demonstrates that the effect can be much more dramatic when it is combined with benefit non-take up.

Figure 16: Impact of over-indebtedness on household disposable income (2 adults + 2 children)



Source: Originally published in Trlifajová Hurrle 2019b: 388.

The paradox effects of indebtedness on the work motivation was confirmed also in some of the interviews:

I just got a job offer for 12,000, but it wouldn't pay off. I'll only go to work when my husband has a job and we'll be able to apply for insolvency. When I worked, we had 15,000 and now that we're at home, we have 17,000.

(woman, couple, 2 children, low housing costs, quoted after Ibid.: 388)

While indebtedness and wage seizures are in many cases demotivating factors, which push vulnerable people into semi-formal or informal employment arrangements, it is on the opposite a motivating factor for those entering the process of debt relief. While there existed at the time of the research no path towards debt relief for those with very high debts and low income, the possibility existed for those being able to repay at least 30 per cent of their initial debts. For those falling into this category with the will to change their situation, even low-rewarding (though not temporary) employment can be crucial to persuade the court to accept the request for personal bankruptcy.

3.4 How could spatial and ethnic data be used to better target the most vulnerable groups?

3.4.1 Findings from desk research

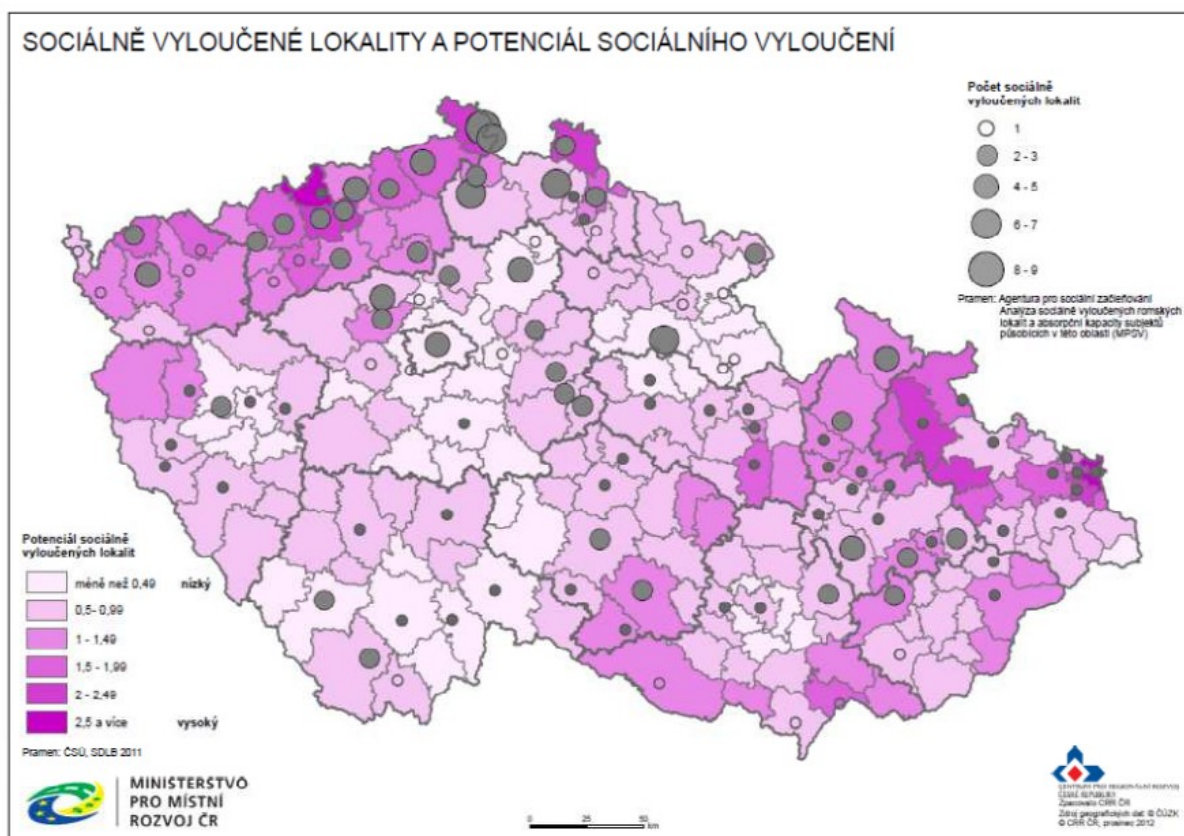
In the introduction to our above-introduced article on socially excluded localities, we noticed that the application of territorial criteria has been one of strategy increasingly promoted by the European Commission in order to improve the effectiveness of Roma-targeting policies:

“The EU has been pressuring candidate and member states to improve the situation of the 10–12 million Roma in Europe, which were in a recent communication described as living “in extreme marginalisation ... and in very poor socio-economic conditions” and facing “discrimination, social exclusion and segregation” (European Commission 2010, p. 2). However, international political pressure has often met limited commitment of national and local decision-makers, which reflects widespread public resistance to the objective of Roma inclusion. The efforts by the EU and other international institutions were hence not successful in substantially changing the overall situation (Barany 2001; UNDP 2003; Guy, Kovats 2006; Steward 2012; Guy, ed. 2013).

As the most disadvantaged Roma tend to live segregated from the majority population (Ringold, Orenstein, Wilkens 2004) one strategy increasingly promoted by the European Commission in order to improve the effectiveness of policies has been the application of territorial criteria. Using European funding, there have been attempts in a number of countries to identify these local concentrations of poverty and underdevelopment and address the situation of their inhabitants.” (Hurrell et al 2016: 545)

Even though the concept of the socially excluded locality has its conceptual problems, which we debated in the same article, the results of GAC 2015 and similar mappings can offer guidance which municipalities and regions require specific attention by the state. Another important set of data, which allows to identify areas and municipalities with a concentration of social problems, is the data on over-indebtedness published by Hábl 2017. Focusing more generally on the character and level of development on the level of Czech regions and micro-regions (ORP), the Czech Strategy for Regional Development 2014 – 2020 introduced several classifications of regions and micro-regions. Determining the eligibility for EU structural funds financing in relation to specific priorities, the strategy distinguishes between developing areas, stabilized areas, and peripheral areas (Ministerstvo pro místní rozvoj 2013: 82). Part of the strategy’s analytical section is also a map (figure 17) of micro-regions with socially disadvantaged areas (Ibid.: 62). The authors of the strategy combined for this purpose data on the level of ORP (unemployment, welfare payments) with estimates on the number of socially excluded Roma in the region and the number of socially excluded Roma localities identified by GAC 2006a.

Figure 17: Micro-regions with socially disadvantaged areas



Source: Ministerstvo pro místní rozvoj (2013): 62.

If data on public expenditures are structured in a way that allows for territorial analysis, the analysis can for example show whether particular programmes are reaching areas with the most urgent needs. More than that, territorial data are essential for the planning of public investments. The Ministry for Social Affairs processes for example territorial information when deciding about the distribution of state resources for the financing of social work among regions and individual municipalities.

In theory, ethnic data offer similar possibilities. Exact data on ethnicity can for example be crucial to identify discriminatory practices in housing or employment. Ethnic data can also help to verify claims about a minority's alleged over-representation among criminals or welfare beneficiaries. However, in the Czech Republic it is in many areas not legally possible to record the ethnicity of citizen. As most people with Roma ethnic background choose to not declare being of Roma ethnicity in the census, it is in addition to this difficult to decide who should be considered Roma. Most statistical information on Roma are therefore estimates.

While this makes it complicated to calculate how much money is invested into the goal of Roma integration, in Hurre et al 2015 we nevertheless tried to analyse the spending of Structural Funds resources in projects that targeted Roma:

“Based on data from the RIS (Regional Information Service) database (www.risy.cz) and on the interactive map of Roma localities in the Czech Republic which are either

socially excluded or threatened by social exclusion (GAC 2006b), this study focuses on the territorial distribution and dominant types of activities. Unlike in Slovakia, where the integration of marginalized Roma has been one of the so-called “horizontal priorities” of the Structural Funds, it is rather difficult to come up with an estimate of the number of EU-financed projects that have been targeted on Roma, as there is no simple way to identify Roma-relevant activities in the database. For the purpose of this study, the RIS database was searched with a number of keywords that are often used in the context of Roma integration. As some of these key words are also used in the context of other target groups, the project descriptions of all identified projects were analysed as a second step in order to determine whether the project did in fact seek to target Roma.” (Ibid.: 79)

This analysis identified 241 EU-funded projects with a financial volume of 2 767 858 578 CZK (ca. 106 million EUR), where it seemed either clear or at least highly probable that Roma were targeted (directly or indirectly). The analysis of the supported activities further allowed to identify a strong prioritization of social work and counselling:

“While it would be misleading to deny the importance of high-quality services in these areas, the analysis of funding showed that other areas are quite neglected. This is especially the case in the important area of housing.” (Ibid.: 82)

We acknowledge in this study at the same time serious methodological limitations:

“Due to the above-described difficulties in establishing the ethnicity of project beneficiaries, the list of 241 can certainly not be considered to be complete: it has rather the function of a sample. Realized through the creation of a table that contains information on key aspects of each project, the analysis of this sample made it possible to access a certain amount of important information about how EU resources are used to help the Roma. For the interpretation of these results we also used other types of information, such as interviews with representatives of municipalities and organisations that are using structural funds resources.” (Ibid.: 80)

3.4.2 The Slovak experience with the usage of spatial and ethnic data (Hurrell et al 2012 / Mušinka et al 2013)

As mentioned in the quoted analysis, Slovakia defined the “integration of marginalised Roma communities” as one of the horizontal priorities of the operational programmes in the 2007-2013 programming period. Matching data on projects with territorial data from the first volume of the Atlas of Roma Communities in Slovakia (Radičová 2004), my publication “Uncertain Impact: Have the Roma in Slovakia Benefitted from the European Social Fund?” analysed the territorial distribution of supported projects. The research was realized together with anthropologist Jan Grill (at that time University of Manchester); other contributing authors were Daniel Škobla, Andrey Ivanov and Jaroslav Kling from the United Nations Development Programme. The book can be found in the appendix of the dissertation report.

In the introduction to the book, we summarized the objectives of the study and the methodological approach in the following words:

“The current analysis seeks to provide a comprehensive evaluation of the ESF contribution to improving the living conditions of the Roma. It does this through an integrated evaluative perspective, which takes into account the combination of a statistical approach with that of a qualitatively oriented inquiry.

The first pillar of the chosen methodology is a statistical analysis of internal project documents from a sample of 298 projects that was merged with the database of the Atlas for Roma Communities in Slovakia (2004), which provides very detailed information about 1,643 locations (municipalities, Roma settlements, ethnic concentrations within municipalities, etc.). The combination of the data from these two datasets did allow for assessing the distribution of the resources both in geographical terms (correlations with geographical distribution of the Roma population, differences between regions) and social terms (level of development, unemployment, segregation).

While this statistical approach was well-suited to analyse the distribution of the invested resources, the method is insufficient for understanding how the invested resources affected the targeted communities. In order to complement the picture emerging from the statistical analysis with the experiences of those who participated in ESF-funded projects as managers or ultimate beneficiaries, the research methodology’s second pillar is a number of visits to project sites, which were realized in Eastern Slovakia’s Prešov Region during March 2012.” (Hurrle et al 2012: 19 – 20)

Our study revealed that the funds mostly failed to reach locations with the biggest needs. While the following summary of findings is of course specific to the situation in Slovakia, the underlying problems and dilemmas are more universal and need to be tackled also in the case of the Czech Republic.

We suggest that the definition and usage of ‘Marginalized Roma Communities’ as a category for policy targeting is relevant and useful: “It does not target Roma who are integrated or who live in non-marginalized communities, but those that are most in need.” (Ibid.)

However, the study negatively assesses the ESF programme’s territorial targeting. Despite the existing regional disparities, the rules of the programme included no instrument for steering investments to the regions, municipalities and settlements that are most in need of support:

“The analysis suggests that, on the contrary, people in such locations benefitted from ESF grants even less than the inhabitants in average localities. Using spending per Romainhabitant as an indicator, the investments were highest in some districts of western Slovakia, suggesting that factors other than real needs influence the allocation of ESF funding.” (Ibid.)

Our research further identified places with an awkward concentration of allegedly Roma-relevant

projects, which were realized by different organisations that seemed inter-connected. Based on the data from the Atlas, these places seemed not to be characterized by particularly urgent needs in regard to Roma integration. While the study did not further explore the factors that led to these concentrations, it is possible to conclude that the most important determinant for the distribution of money were local absorption capacities. This is probably also the reason why the study revealed that less ESF support went to smaller municipalities. Apparently, in many of these places neither the municipality nor civic society-based organisations had the capacities needed to successfully apply for financial support and administrate a project.

Our study notes that the absorption-driven distribution of resources has direct implications for Slovak Roma, the majority of whom lives in the less-developed eastern and southern regions of Slovakia. While it would have been desirable to have criteria that reflect the needs of these regions, another question is how to ensure that resources are actually ending in those municipalities with Roma communities in greatest need (and not just those that happen to live in eastern Slovakia). The study hence concludes that eligibility criteria need to be developed on the basis of mapping the concrete conditions within the specific locality where the Roma community lives, and not on the basis of the general data on socio-economic conditions.

Reacting to the findings of the report, the European Commission asked to use in the following programming period territorial data in order to better target the most disadvantaged Roma (interviews Škobla, Polačková). One of the preconditions for the finalization of the partnership agreement on the programming period requested by the Commission was hence the realization of an updated mapping, which led to the publication of the 2013 Atlas of Roma Communities (Mušinka et al 2014). The Commission further requested that the Government Office should come up with a method to identify most disadvantaged localities and to earmark specific resources for the improvement of conditions in these municipalities. Included as a chapter in the publication of the Atlas, I suggested how to design an index in order to identify municipalities with the most urgent needs.

Attached to this report as fifth appendix, the chapter first introduces the reader to the structure of the relatively complex Atlas 2013 data set. It explains that it is necessary to distinguish between the level of municipalities and the level of individual settlements. While the first set contains general information about the availability of technical and social infrastructure in the municipality, the second set of data contains very detailed information about each settlement in the municipality. The introduction of the data set is followed by a discussion of data that are suitable to be used in an index for the identification of municipalities with most urgent needs. Developed from the index used in the Hurrell et al 2012 study discussed, I introduce a new version of the “Segregation and Underdevelopment Index” and apply this index in order to rank settlements by the need for intervention (Mušinka et al 2014: 71 - 76).

We further discuss in the text advantages and possible risks of the index’s usage for programming purposes. While the index-based channeling of resources could help to better target places where interventions are most needed, we argue at the same time against a “too mechanic” application of the index. One argument is the dynamic development of the situation – the data used in the index do not need to reflect current conditions. Excluding places where conditions are better could also mean to “punish” municipalities that have persuaded pro-integrative policies in the past. Another issue discussed is absorption capacities. While it is clearly problematic to distribute resources primarily on the basis of absorption capacities, the disregard of this factor could mean that available resources are not used at all or not professionally. Based on this discussion, I recommend two different strategies for the linking of public spending and spatial and ethnic data. The first strategy is to use the index in order to limit eligibility to the places where conditions are worst and interventions most needed. Those municipalities could be automatically eligible to financial

support (e.g. for construction of basic technical infrastructure or employment of social field workers). Alternatively, it would be possible to use competitive selection principles to select projects from the eligible municipalities (Ibid.: 73 – 76). The second strategy suggested is to use the index in order to distribute resources among regions or micro-regions. This would minimize some of the potential risks of index-driven distribution of resources while ensuring that resources are flowing into areas where problems are found in a concentrated form (Ibid.: 76 – 77).

Seeking to avoid a repetition of the problems identified by Hurrell et al 2012, The Partnership Agreement foresaw the establishment of a number of programmes that would use a spatial mechanism in order to focus on the integration of marginalised Roma from the most disadvantaged settlements. While eligibility was in the case of thematic goal 9 (support of social integration and the battle with poverty) with a total allocation of 69 millions of EUR limited to municipalities where the 2013 Atlas lists separated or segregated Roma settlements, the priority 4 (Integration of marginalized Roma communities) foresaw so-called “take-away packages” for municipalities with the most underdeveloped and segregated municipalities, to be identified using a new version of the segregation indexes introduced in Hurrell et al 2012 and Mušinka et al 2014. The idea behind this measure was to minimize administrative barriers to the access of the funds, which Hurrell et al 2012 identified as one likely reason for the low absorption rate in disadvantaged regions and in particular the smallest group of municipalities. The support was realized in the form of so-called national projects, where the local social workers and coordinators are not employed by the municipalities in question, yet directly by a state agency created for this purpose.

The distribution rules promoted by the Commission led to lively debates in Slovakia. While most of this debate took place in popular media, the most systematic criticism was presented by Marcinin 2015. Marcinin questioned the methodology of the indexes used / proposed in Hurrell et al 2012, Mušinka et al 2013 and of the index created on the basis of these recommendations by the experts of the Slovak Government Office. In addition to this, he questioned the very idea of applying an index, as the chosen indicators would automatically lead to the ignorance of the plight of rural non-Roma communities that could also face considerable challenges.

3.4.3 Comparing the Slovak and Czech approaches

As any other group of citizens, members of the Roma minorities in the Czech Republic and Slovakia are influenced by a large variety of state policies and programmes. In many respects, these general policies tend to have a larger influence on their situation than specific measures, which are implemented on the basis of specific strategies. In both countries, there is a tendency to finance a large share of these specific measures with resources from the European Structural Funds.

As outlined in the previous sub-chapter, in the present Structural Funds’ programming period Slovakia based its strategies in the area of Roma integration strongly on the results of the 2014 Atlas of Roma Communities. The aim of this approach was to focus among the very large number of municipalities with Roma communities on the settlements where conditions are most problematic. As outlined in Hurrell et al 2016, the Czech Republic used in some programmes a similar but less sophisticated approach, asking municipalities who requested support for activities in the area of social inclusion to demonstrate that there is a socially excluded locality on the municipality’s territory. In the current programming period, municipalities and micro-regions that meet this requirement can apply for support through the “Co-ordinated Approach Towards Socially Excluded Localities”. Once accepted as a partner entity by the state Agency for Social Inclusion, the municipality or micro-region is given a privileged access to Structural Funds funding for investments in the area of social work, employment, housing, education and crime prevention.

The projects are developed together with the Agency's local co-ordinator, which leaves the agency a certain degree of influence on the type of activities supported. According to the Agency's rules for the selection of applicant municipalities / micro-regions, applicants are asked to demonstrate their eligibility through the data from GAC 2015 or other relevant studies or documents (Agentura pro sociální začlenování 2018).

When comparing the Czech and Slovak approach concerning the distribution of resources in the current programming period, Slovakia is hence characterized by a stronger tendency of data-driven prioritization. In the Czech Republic, the concept of the socially excluded locality is used to create a binary distinction between eligible and non-eligible places. In relation to the first category, the Czech approach leaves more space for individual consultation and negotiation.

While it would go beyond this dissertation project to complexly assess the advantages and disadvantages of both approaches, it is necessary to stress that the challenges for Roma integration in both countries differs considerably. In Slovakia, in the case of the least developed settlements, one central problem is the creation of basic technical infrastructure, such as access roads, provision of drinking water and housing. While our case studies showed that it is possible to find similar conditions also in the Czech Republic (localities in Spomyšl and Horní Počaply), these are very exceptional cases.

Inventing the category of the "socially excluded locality", the Czech Republic took some inspiration from the Slovak approach, where settlements are traditionally an important category. We have shown in Hurrell et al 2016 that the category of the socially excluded locality is defined relatively vaguely and that there is a tendency to use this term in inflationary ways. In some cases it was difficult to clearly define the borderline between the locality and rest of the local community. The problems of the inhabitants of these localities are at least in the case of peripheral rural regions analysed in the dissertation project extremely interwoven with the overall problems of these areas. For these reasons, it seems questionable if the presence of a locality is at all the right indicator for a need of intervention. While the focus on the locality is certainly justified in places like Spomyšl and Horní Počaply, in other regions studied within the framework of the dissertation project it might be more meaningful to decide about the focus of public interventions on the basis of relevant data (unemployment, housing, indebtedness, educational data) from the whole micro-region.

To a large extent, the same conclusion seems to be made also by the managers of the Agency for Social Inclusion. While the methodology of the "co-ordinated approach" continues to be built on the concept of the socially excluded locality, it acknowledges at the same time the limits of this concept in rural and peripheral areas:

"Especially in peripheral areas, due to the structural disadvantage of these areas, which manifests itself in high unemployment, low education, or the age structure of the population, it is often not possible to separate the problems of the inhabitants of excluded localities from the other inhabitants." (Agentura pro sociální začlenování 2018: 11).

The same document explains that the target group of supported interventions is the whole population of the municipality or micro-region in question, not only the inhabitants of the localities.

4 Conclusions and Recommendations

4.1 Conclusions

The overall objective of my dissertation project was to explain the complex processes that led to the emergence of new concentrations of poor Roma in rural areas. The exploration of this question led to the definition of four key research areas. Working together with a number of colleagues, I published in each of these areas various types of publications. While some had the character of policy papers, which do not fully comply with academic standards, five included in the appendix of this dissertation report are scientific articles (2), book chapters (2) and one book. While the main findings of the research and the conclusions of these publications were presented already in more detailed form in the sub-chapters 3.1.4, 3.2.4, 3.3.4 and 3.4.4, the following summary offers a brief overview of the most relevant conclusions in the main areas of research:

4.1.1 Data and conceptual clarity

- On a conceptual level, the Czech state's approach towards the integration of Roma is characterized by the co-existence of two different approaches that are anchored in different strategic documents and implemented by different government bodies. The first of these approaches is the ethnic approach. It seeks to protect the minority's political and cultural rights and foster its cultural identity. The second approach pleads on the opposite for the de-ethnization of the Roma issue. Asking to focus on the condition of social exclusion of many Roma, the champions of this second approach came up with the concept of the *socially excluded locality* as a tool to target those Roma, and also Non-Roma living as their immediate neighbours, who are most threatened by social exclusion.
- As the non-ethnic approach began to dominate more and more the Czech approach towards Roma exclusion, the "socially excluded (Roma) locality" developed into a key concept. There have been various studies that mapped socially excluded localities both on the national and regional level. The concept is used also practically in the area of public policy. There are for example grant schemes that are available only to municipalities or micro-regions with a socially excluded locality on its territory.
- The second national mapping of socially excluded localities indicated that the number of socially excluded localities continues to grow. While the majority of localities are in the urban agglomerations of Northern Bohemia and Northern Moravia, which are areas where Roma have been living traditionally since the times of the socialist regime, the study identified a disproportionately strong rise of the number of localities in rural areas.
- Analysing in detail a sample of such rural localities in selected rural micro-regions (and, for purposes of comparison, one urban location), our research revealed that there is a very high variety of conditions found in places that were identified in various researches as socially excluded locality.
- While the concept of the socially excluded locality fitted well in some of these places, the usage of the concept seemed problematic in others. In some places, the limited differences

of the social conditions of the locality's inhabitants with the conditions of the surrounding population made it difficult to understand why certain buildings were listed and others were not. This seems to be in particular a problem of peripheral rural areas, where poverty and social problems are widespread also among the majority population.

- The research revealed at the same time that the intended de-ethnization of the debate seem to have resulted only in the replacement of names. Even though the concept is formulated ethnically neutral, in reality the term is used only to describe places where Roma live.
- While it is not at all easy to assess to what extent the inhabitants of a particular house can be described as socially excluded, the Roma ethnicity of the inhabitants of particular houses is especially in rural municipalities common knowledge. As the currently used conceptual framework does not offer too many alternative designations, there is a risk that the word "socially excluded" is used as synonym for Roma and "socially excluded locality" as a synonym for places where Roma live.

4.1.2 Mechanisms that drive poverty-related migration and housing segregation

- The realization of a survey with two different sets of questionnaires among 1) all rural municipalities where GAC 2015 identified socially excluded localities, and 2) the heads of district (ORP) social departments responsible for these municipalities, allowed to verify three hypotheses about driving factors behind the growing number of socially excluded localities in rural areas.
- While there are examples of poverty-driven migration from larger cities to rural areas, the scale of this phenomenon is not as large as it is sometimes assumed by fearful inhabitants of peripheral places. There are several reasons why the highly problematic housing situation of Roma in many urban centres does not lead to a stronger migration from cities to the countryside. The first reason is the importance of existing social bounds and the cultural gap between life in the city and life in the village. The second factor is the social system, which compensates to certain limits recipients of welfare the higher housing costs in urban areas. In difference to this, rural-specific types of costs, for example for transportation to schools or public offices, are not compensated. The seemingly cost-effective migration to the countryside leads hence rather to additional costs.
- More important than migration from urban centres to rural areas are processes of segregation and concentration within rural areas. This includes migration from rural towns to villages in their vicinity and the emergence of segregated rural localities, which attract Roma and other vulnerable people from the area who face difficulties in accessing regular housing. This phenomenon can be described as the emergence of a parallel housing market, which offers housing of lower quality and serves those that have limited access to standard housing.
- A third explanation for the increased number of rural localities is the growing knowledge and awareness for this problem. The research confirmed this assumption and revealed that the history of many rural localities is older than seems to be implied by the comparison of the two nation-wide mappings realized in 2006 and 2015. The survey also revealed that the vast majority of localities emerged in places where Roma have been living

traditionally. This points both to the importance of family structures and to the gradual transformation of integrated communities into segregated communities.

- One especially important finding of the survey, which was confirmed also by the results of the case studies, is the emergence of ‘cyclic migrants’ who move seemingly permanently from locality to locality. While the number of these migrating households is probably not very high, the phenomenon contributes greatly to a worsening of relations both within the locality and between locality and its surroundings. Apparently, one driving factor for the emergence of this phenomenon is indebtedness and a desire to leave overwhelming debts behind.

4.1.3 Position of socially excluded in relation to the regional labour market

- While it is generally known that unemployment is one of the key problems of the Czech Roma and that there is a high degree of dependency towards the welfare state, the research sought to better understand the exact nature of the relationship between labour market and welfare system. While many welfare reforms in the Czech Republic were guided by the idea that ‘work must pay’, the analysis revealed that this is goal is often not met in the reality of our interviewees.
- Combining mathematical modelling with findings from interviews with people on the border line between employment and welfare state, the research demonstrated that many assumptions of models that seek to calculate the financial reward from employment are not reflecting the reality of the interviewed persons.
- At the time of our research, the first limitation was the character of employment opportunities offered. While ‘work must pay’ models traditionally compare income from welfare with income from full-time employment through a labour contract, our respondents stated that their chances to find such employment were (at least at the time when the interviews were conducted) highly limited. In the consequence, most of the respondents combined periods of unemployment with periods of employment in precarious conditions, which resulted in additional costs (e.g. for health insurance). While the demand for low-skilled labour is influenced by the condition of the economy, which was at the time of research only beginning to recover from the global economic crisis, the tendency towards precarious working conditions for low-skilled workers is a general trend, which has been observed in many Western countries.
- The social system is extremely complex. Due to this complexity, it is not only for beneficiaries of welfare, but even for Labour Office employees very complicated to predict how a change of the employment status (or other changes, such as number of people living in household) will affect the household income in the following four-month-period. Remaining economically passive or combining income from social assistance with income from informal activities can therefore be a strategy of risk-avoidance. Unexpected reductions of income can on the opposite be at the beginning of the path into indebtedness. Another problem is the non-take-up of benefits among working households, who are not aware of the possibility to combine earned income with social assistance. The problem is deepened by the communication strategy of the Labour Office, which does not inform proactively about its tools against poverty.

- Especially in case of families with children, where social benefits are higher than in the case of individuals without family, the financial reward of accepting employment is very low. In the case of rural regions, where employment is often accessible only outside of the area, the costs for transportation and other work-related types of spending can easily be higher than the difference between income from social assistance and wage salary.
- These problems are gravely deepened by the problems of over-indebtedness and wage seizure, which are problems faced by a very high percentage of people threatened by social exclusion in peripheral areas. The current system of debt collection leaves very limited motivation to accept work. This is especially true for highly indebted people, who are not eligible for personal bankruptcy. For those eligible for personal bankruptcy, accepting employment can be highly motivational even if the direct benefit for the household income is very limited.

4.1.4 Usage of spatial and ethnic data

- Recalling the example of Slovakia, the chapter discusses different ways how spatial and ethnic data could be employed in order to better target public investments to people with the most urgent needs. The report introduces two Slovak publications co-authored by the author of this dissertation, which had significant influence on the development of Roma-targeting policies in Slovakia.
- The first of these publications analysed all Roma-targeting ESF projects both in regard to the type of supported activities and their territorial distribution. The study revealed that this distribution did not reflect the concentration of most urgent needs in certain regions of the Czech Republic and did not correlate with the territorial distribution of the Slovak Roma population. Apparently, the distribution was not driven by the needs of the local Roma communities, but by the absorption capacities of municipalities and civic society organisations. In the consequence, the least resources ended in the most underdeveloped places.
- Reflecting on these lessons from the former programming period, the second text suggests how a data-based index could be used to distribute EU resources for Roma integration more effectively.
- The study further briefly compares the Slovak experiences with the approach taken in the Czech Republic, where the eligibility to a number of programmes for social exclusion depends on the existence of a socially excluded locality on the territory of the municipality or micro-region.

4.2 Recommendations

4.2.1 Philosophy of public intervention

Focusing mostly on housing and labour market integration, this dissertation named a large number of difficulties that poor Roma and other marginalized people face in peripheral rural areas of the Czech Republic. While presenting a number of recommendations specifically for the areas of housing and labour market integration in the following sub-chapters, I would like to discuss before this the philosophy of successful public interventions.

The question about the right philosophy for the design and implementation of policy interventions is linked with one of the findings presented in subchapter 3.1, which pointed to the often blurry demarcation line between the socially excluded (Roma) locality and the surrounding population, where social problems might not be as severe as in the case of the locality, but still much more common than in the average Czech population.

While it might be morally justifiable and even effective to focus with a public intervention on the most disadvantaged group of people, policies that are locally perceived as delivering benefits only to Roma will in many cases fail for political reasons. While one famous and well-documented example for such a political failure was the ambitious redevelopment plan for the Roma settlement in Svinia, Slovakia (Scheffel 2015), the history of the Agency for Social Inclusion saw many examples of plans that were eventually not realized due to protests by citizen or political opponents. One example in the regions analysed within the dissertation project has been a planned low-threshold youth centre in Mělník, which the city had to stop due to protests by fearful citizen; another one not very far from the Žluticko micro-region was the plan for a similar centre in the town of Toužim, where the public resistance cumulated in a successful public referendum (2012).⁹ In order to avoid similar misfortunes, it is important to think from the beginning about the distribution of benefits between Roma and Non-Roma, 'locality' and rest of the community, or any other dividing line that characterizes the local community and could turn into the battle line of a potential conflict. Linked to this is the question of communication – is it necessary to strengthen in the communication that a housing project will be for inhabitants from a locality, or could the target group be described much more broadly in more popular terms such as single mothers with children, seniors, people with disabilities and citizen facing serious problems with housing?

The difficult situation of the majority population in some of the analysed regions prompts another suggestion. Even though the described problems have their roots also in discrimination and the history of the Roma in Czechoslovakia, the concrete situation in many places is very strongly influenced by the overall situation of the disadvantaged region. While particular measures for the most disadvantaged groups such as the inhabitants of socially excluded localities are necessary to address particular issues, such specific projects should ideally unfold within a broader area-based development programme, which target the main problems of the most disadvantaged regions, such as educational profile of the local population, quality of transportation infrastructure, or lack of civic involvement.

While it seems politically wise to promote larger projects that deliver benefits across ethnic

⁹ https://www.idnes.cz/karlovy-vary/zpravy/protestproti-socialnimu-centru-v-touzimi.A120831_1823006_vary-zpravy_slv

divisions, it would be desirable as well to create much more opportunities for the self-organisation of Roma (or, depending on the local situation, of the most disadvantaged groups of people). While there is a lot of money available for activities in support of social inclusion, the complicated administrative procedures of the Structural Funds create very high barriers for the involvement of non-professional organisations. Even though the limited educational background and the limited participatory traditions in the Czech Republic complicate participation, it seems impossible to achieve inclusion without the active involvement of those to be included.

4.2.2 Addressing Housing Segregation and Poverty-Driven Migration

When recalling the analysis of problematic housing conditions and the emergence of segregated localities in Hurrle et al 2016 and Trlifajová Hurrle 2019b introduced in subchapters 3.1 and 3.2, it is necessary to emphasize the systemic factors that are driving these developments. Even though there have been various attempts to introduce a law on social housing, to this moment the Czech Republic lacks such legislation. Social housing policy is mainly realized through the payment of housing benefits and the financial support of the construction of municipal housing. Whereas the Law on Municipalities vaguely defines a role of municipalities in the care for the housing needs of its citizens (Law No. 128/2000 Sb., § 35, 2), the municipalities are in reality relatively free to decide if - and at what scope, and for which target groups - they want to provide social housing.

While the lack of a systematic social housing policy is problematic, the welfare system of the Czech Republic is designed in a way that should offer low-income households' nevertheless access to standard rental housing. The housing benefit system hence immunizes financially weak households to a certain degree from the harshness of the unregulated commercial rent market. This is especially true outside of the economically strongest urban centres, where the rise of rent costs of the last years pushed rent costs over the limits that are accepted by the Labour Office as eligible costs. However, while this system should in theory outbalance to a large extent the financial disadvantage of poorer households, in reality the financial support is apparently not sufficient to overcome other barriers that limit the access to regular rent housing of poor households. This is true in particular for true for poor Roma households, who are disadvantaged both due to their social status and their ethnicity.

Our research in peripheral areas, where average rent costs are not high, pointed to the existence of a parallel, sub-standard housing market, which specializes on the accommodating of these groups. This parallel housing market does not contribute to the stabilization of the households - on the contrary, low housing quality and high debt ratios lead to further (repeated) relocations. Due to the abundance of empty objects that could be acquired at low costs, rural locations can be attractive to some businesses operating on this second market. However, rural areas tend to lack also the infrastructure for the solving of social emergencies, such as asylum houses or emergency flats. This exacerbates the situation of some of the localities that serve households in a situation of crisis as informal "transfer stations".

While the research rebutted popular myths about mass migrations of poor Roma from cities to rural and peripheral locations, there clearly exists a tendency towards segregation and also relocation patterns from rural towns to more peripheral localities. New policies, which had been introduced after the conclusion of the field research, such as the no-housing-benefit zones, are likely to intensify relocation trends in the direction of more peripheral places. In the absence of systemic intervention, there is a risk that the situation of social exclusion, the deterioration of relations and the increase in the number of excluded localities will further deepen in rural regions.

Moreover, the migration of people who are perceived as "problematic" has strong psychological aspects. This is especially true in disadvantaged places and regions. Moving people who are perceived as problematic can intensify fears about the region's overall future and provoke negative environmental reactions.

In addition to this, the fear of unwanted migration from other municipalities complicates the formulation of integration policies on the local level, as municipalities tend to be concerned about attracting Roma and other groups threatened by social exclusion from other municipalities. As there are well-documented examples of municipalities that actively tried to push citizen that were perceived as problematic to other (often smaller and more peripheral) municipalities, it is not surprising that even enlightened local governments perceive a need to prevent citizen from other municipalities to access municipal housing and other services. In addition to this, many municipalities introduced rules for the selection of tenants of municipal flats that effectively exclude the poorest people; others privatized most of the municipal housing stock and lack therefore the means to help citizen that are facing housing emergencies. Consequently, there is a large group of poor households in the Czech Republic who cannot expect help with housing from their home municipality. While it is necessary to address this serious problem through national policy, municipalities and other local stakeholders are able to improve the local situation even without a change on the national level. This is reflected in our recommendations, which address separately the state and local municipalities.

Recommendations for the Czech government

- The Czech Republic should enact a Law for Social Housing, which defines situations of housing need and establishes responsibilities of municipalities towards local citizen that are in need of housing. The Law should also provide municipalities with sufficient resources to allow them to provide non-segregated housing of regular quality for these groups. While existing municipal housing stock should be used for social purposes, municipalities should be given the possibility to fulfil their new responsibilities also in cooperation with private housing owners.
- In the case of very small municipalities, which lack the financial means and personal capacities to launch their own housing policies, the task of providing social housing might be delegated to voluntary unions of municipalities. Alternatively, the state could delegate the new responsibility to larger municipalities (ORP), who would be responsible to establish a regional social housing infrastructure in cooperation with smaller municipalities on the regional level. In order to avoid the misuse of such policies by larger (ORP) cities for the transfer of problematic citizen to particular municipalities, the state would need to establish clear rules for the distribution of people and costs within the region.
- Normative housing costs that are defined by the state as upper limits for the payment of housing benefits need to reflect the actual housing costs in urban centres in order to avoid poverty-driven migration from economic centres to peripheral areas.
- It is essential to mitigate financial entry barriers to the access of regular housing, such as deposit payments and costs for real estate agents. While the housing benefit system improves the financial capacities of poor households to pay their monthly rent

significantly, the system was at the time of the research only partly able to deal with the crucial problem of one-time entry costs (deposits, agent fees, costs of moving). A related problem is the complexity of the welfare system, which makes it hard for welfare beneficiaries to predict their income after changes of employment status of any household member. As the fallout or delay of expected payments is one of the most common entry points to indebtedness, it is highly desirable to make the welfare system more transparent and predictable.

- Financial support for the construction of social housing should be channelled to areas of economic growth, where the inhabitants have good chances of finding employment opportunities. In the case of peripheral areas, municipalities should be given the possibility to acquire empty housing and adapt it for social housing purposes.
- The state needs to change the philosophy of its struggle with the “business with poverty”. The hitherto implemented or debated measures (e.g. curbing of housing benefits, introduction of no-benefit zones) contributed to the destabilization of the poorest and most vulnerable households. We suggest instead to work consequently on the strengthening of the legal rights of vulnerable tenants who face problematic treatment by private landlords. This could mean to offer legal assistance or to react more proactively to obvious violations of security and hygienic standards. As tenants of problematic houses are currently often refraining from complaints out of fear to lose their housing, the guiding principles of such interventions should be to sanction irresponsible property owners while protecting at the same time the housing needs of their tenants.

Recommendations for rural municipalities

- The research revealed that many conflicts within and around socially excluded localities are driven by high fluctuation, which is often the result of the extreme destabilization of a relatively small number of households who tend to migrate from locality to locality. As most of these migration patterns are occurring within regions or even within micro-regions, it is essential to work on the stabilization of such families and the prevention of new cases of destabilized households. The ideal strategy for achieving this goal would be to co-operate with other municipalities on the micro-region level (e.g. via union of municipalities, or Local Action Groups (LAG)) on the provision of housing, the arranging of housing benefits, and the provision of related social services, including depth counselling.
- As the emergence of socially excluded localities in rural municipalities is in many cases the result of failed privatization projects, municipalities might consider to purchase privatized property back in order to create social housing for various target groups (including low-barrier housing for elderly and handicapped people). The reconstruction of housing and the provision of social services could at the same time create employment opportunities for local unemployed.
- Municipalities with own housing stock should establish clear and transparent criteria for the selection of tenants. In order to satisfy also the housing needs of citizen that have special needs or need support in order to live in the flat successfully, municipalities should proactively address social service providers from the region to offer social field work.

- While the possibilities for direct intervention of municipalities is limited in the case of privately-owned localities, municipalities should use all available means in order to pressure the property owners to fulfil their obligations towards their tenants and the local community. This could include announcements at the hygienic station and the building inspection office, but also the threat of medialization. Municipalities should at the same time inform problematic owners about strategies for the improvement of conditions, such as the involvement of NGOs or other community-based entities in the management of the building(s), improved co-operation with Labour Office (in order to minimize rent payment failures) or co-operation between landlord and municipality in the selection of new tenants from the local community and the provision of social field work.

4.2.3 Reforming Czechia's Welfare System and System of Dept Collection

The article Trlifajová Hurrle 2019b introduced in 3.3 dealt with the position of marginalized inhabitants of peripheral regions on the labour market. Focusing on the often highly precarious position of these people in the border zones between legal employment, informal employment and welfare support, our analysis revealed a number of systematic problems, which complicate the integration in the labour market. The most serious problem is indebtedness and the rules for wage seizure, which drastically reduce the financial benefits of legal work. Another problem is the complexity of the welfare system, which makes it very difficult for welfare recipients to predict how changes of the employment status will affect their income in the months after the change of the economic status of any household member. The chapter demonstrated that the current setting of the welfare system and related legislation (mainly rules for wage seizure in case of over-indebtedness) do not hold up to the principle that work should pay, which has been the credo of many policy reforms not only in the Czech Republic.

What needs to be done to ensure that legal work will truly lead to higher income than the passive dependency from welfare payments also in the case of workers with low qualification that are living in peripheral regions? And are there ways to ensure that the income from such activities is high enough to enable working families to live a life without poverty?

While the improvement of the situation requires first of all changes on the level of national policy, municipalities and other local stakeholders can nevertheless launch own initiatives that could help marginalized citizen to find a path into regular employment. Hence the recommendations are again divided into recommendation for the Czech state and recommendations for municipalities and other local stakeholders.

Recommendations for the Czech government:

- The calculation of social assistance and housing benefits is very complicated. Not only recipients of welfare, but also Labour Office officers have difficulties to predict how a change of employment status will affect a family's capacity to cover timely housing and living costs. In addition to this, information about the available instruments for poverty prevention are not

disseminated broadly in the form of public campaigns, yet rather pointed out discreetly to clients that are perceived as “deserving the help”. The lack of information and the need to proactively ask for support leads to a high extend of benefit non-take up and to a limited knowledge about the possibility of combining social assistance with wage income. Recipients of welfare have also limited possibilities to check if the provided assistance was calculated correctly.

- In order to address these problems of information, we suggest to provide information on available support schemes more proactively and broadly in the regional branches of the Labour Offices. Another very useful tool would be the creation of a web-based calculation, where recipients of welfare could simulate the financial consequences of status changes.
- We further suggest to focus on the situation of the “working poor”. In the Czech context, the most extreme examples of working poor are working households whose income from wage labour is under the state-guaranteed existential minimum. At the time of our research, this was not an uncommon situation in the case of larger families where one parent works for minimal wage. While the entitlement to social assistance reduces somewhat the financial hardship, it is important to realize that this type of assistance was not meant to support working poor on a long-term basis. In order to motivate recipients to accept work, social assistance comes with tough restrictions concerning personal property. Accordingly, many working poor do not even ask for social assistance, which contributes in poor areas to the negative (often ethicized) attitudes towards “welfare parasites”, who are – not entirely incorrectly - perceived as living a better live than those who are working hard at very bad payment conditions.
- One solution to improve the situation of working poor is the rising of the minimal wage, whose level was at the time of the research one of the lowest in the European Union. In cases, where working households will nevertheless depend on social assistance, this assistance should not be provided in the form of the highly restrictive and stigmatizing current social assistance (*dávky v hmotné nouzi*) regime. As this problem concerns mostly families with children, one very effective method how to improve the situation of such workers would be to provide more generous children allowances. It is further recommendable to change the rules for the current children tax bonus, as this important tool fails to reach many poor households who are working in precarious conditions.
- As the financial benefit from low-skill employment (in comparison to unemployment and income from welfare payments) is often not very large, the state could consider how to compensate workers with low skills and / or inhabitants of disadvantaged regions for some of the costs that are linked to employment. In the case of peripheral rural areas, the most significant cost is the costs for commuting.
- Both the labour-market related research in two peripheral regions and the interviews with inhabitants of localities in the selected case regions revealed that over-indebtedness is a very common problem in peripheral regions and an almost universal experience in the case of inhabitants of socially excluded localities. The system for dept collection leaves indebted people not much more from their legal income than what is necessary for bare survival. In many situations, accepting work worsens the social situation of indebted persons, as the eligibility for housing benefits is calculated on the basis of the wage *before* the wage seizure. The combination of depts, which grew in many cases to enormous heights, and low wages, leads in many cases to a situation of a seemingly endless fight for existential survival, which

thoroughly destabilizes families and individuals and wears down the psyche of those concerned.

- As the depth issue is highly complex, we will limit our recommendations to two measures that would lower barriers to labour market integration:
 - Currently, the remaining income after wage seizure is derived from the minimal living costs. This level is very low and has not been increased for many years. While the government justified the decision to not even reflect inflation in the case of the living minimum with the will to motivate people to accept work, in the case of over-indebted households the effect is exactly the opposite. The lower the level for wage seizure, the less an over-indebted worker can keep from his salary. As the entitlement for housing assistance is calculated on the basis of income before wage seizure, the acceptance of work can in the case of indebted workers lead to a reduction of the disposable income and the deepening of poverty. The best solution to this problem would be to establish for indebted people a different threshold for wage seizure than is the live minimum. This level would need to reflect contemporary living costs and also contemporary housing costs, either individually by actual housing costs paid or at least by average rent costs in the region.
 - The second crucial recommendation is to further ease the paths towards depth-relief for over-indebted families and individuals, whose debts are too high to be repaid in a realistically long period of time. While there exists a law for personal bankruptcy, which has recently been reformed, there continue to be extremely indebted groups for whom depth relief is not accessible and for whom there is therefore hardly no path out of social exclusion.
- Most interview partners from various backgrounds agreed that the Labour Offices lack the capacities and skills to deal effectively with unemployed citizen with very complex problems. The basic counselling offered by the Labour Office was by most respondents from a socially excluded background perceived as a reduction to formal controls, which did not improve the position on the labour market. As it seems difficult for the highly hierarchical Labour Office to modify its working methods, the Labour Office might delegate the counselling of citizen with complicated needs to non-governmental subjects or municipal social departments.
- The last recommendation concerns the state's attitude towards poverty and poor people. The driving force behind policy reforms of the last years was the wish to reduce welfare misuse. The reduction of welfare payments and the stricter conditionality were seen as methods to increase the attractiveness of economic activity. However, the analysis of the labour market position of citizen with low skills in disadvantaged regions revealed that at least at the time of the research people from this group were able to find in many situations only precarious (semi-legal) types of employment. While the options for this group did most likely improve in recent years due to the changed situation on the Czech labour market, the rise of precarity is a global trend that is likely to become more prominent also in the case of the Czech Republic. The social system should react to this situation with new tools, which protect precariously employed people from social exclusion. Such measures could concern both directly the labour

market (strengthening of labour inspectorate, availability of job-related legal counselling) and the promotion of policies against poverty and social exclusion. Such measures should focus not only on the prevention of material poverty, but also on the participation in local cultural and social life. This concerns in a special way education of the next generation, both in relation to formal education and the participation in free-time activities.

Recommendations for rural municipalities:

- Rural municipalities should consider to initiate innovations in public transportation in order to improve the accessibility of work at commuting distance. While this could mean to contribute financially to a bus line, it is possible to think also of more flexible forms of public transportation that would even generate employment (e.g. collecting taxi, run by social enterprise or municipal company).
- Rural municipalities should use available grant programmes (by the region, state, EU operational funds) to invest into the education of children from socially disadvantaged background. While it is crucial to lower the number of drop-outs from socially excluded background at elementary schools and vocational schools, it is important to design such programmes more broadly in order to avoid antagonizing the public against investments for unpopular groups.
- Rural municipalities should co-operate with social providers in order to ensure the accessibility of dept-counselling (including preparation of depth-relief).
- Rural municipalities should work on the creation of linkages between local schools and local employers in order to encourage the dissemination of information about today's employment world, with particular focus on children who grew up in an environment dominated by long-term unemployment or highly precarious work.

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d) Attached publications

Annex No.	Authors and name of text:	Estimate of author's share	Type of text	Page
1	Hurrle J, Sykora L, Trlifajova L, Kucera P (2016). Socially excluded localities revisited. GEOGRAFIE, 121(4), 544-565.	50 %	Scientific article	108
2	Trlifajová, L, Hurrle J (2019a): Stěhování chudých a vznik sociálně vyloučených lokalit na venkově z perspektivy místních samospráv. In: Bernard, J. (ed.) (2019): Nic se tady neděje... Životní podmínky na periferním venkově. Prague: SLON.	45 %	Book chapter	131
3	Trlifajová L, Hurrle J (2019b). Work must pay: Does it? Precarious employment and employment motivation for low-income households. Journal of European Social Policy, 29(3), 376-395.	30 %	Scientific article	155
4	Hurrle J, Ivanov A., Grill, J, Kling J, Škobla D (2012). Uncertain impact: have the Roma in Slovakia benefited from the European Social Fund. Findings from an Analysis of the ESF Employment and Social Inclusion Projects in the 2007–2013 Programming Period. Bratislava: United Nations Development Program.	40 %	book	187
5	Hurrle, J: Aplikačné možnosti údajov z ATLASU. In: Mušinka, A., Škobla, D, Hurrle, J., Matlovičová, K, Kling, . (2014): Atlas rómskych komunít na Slovensku 2013. Bratislava: Regionálne centrum Rozvojového programu OSN Pre Európu a Spoločenstvo nezávislých štátov.	100 %	book chapter	296